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LITTLE JOURNEY IN SPAIN: NOTES OF A GOYA PILGRIMAGE

By J. E. CRAWFORD FLITCH

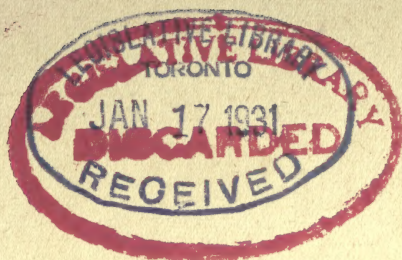
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A LITTLE JOURNEY IN SPAIN

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A LITTLE JOURNEY IN SPAIN

NOTES OF A GOYA PILGRIMAGE

BY

J. E. CRAWFORD FLITCH

AUTHOR OF "MEDITERRANEAN MOODS," ETC.

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*With Eight Illustrations after
Francisco José Goya y Lucientes*



LONDON
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I confess, however, that the dereliction of the task which I had presumed to set myself was not suffered to pass without the strictures of a protesting conscience. I remember that it was when chidden almost to despair by this carping inward monitor that I received your consoling letter, in which you wrote "Goya vive y vive en la España viva." I fear that I snatched at the phrase as a colourable excuse for quitting the ardours of the museum and the library for the easy diversions of the street, the café and—forbear your censure!—the corrido. And I fear too that I abused the liberty which even the most extended and solacing interpretation of your words might have afforded, for only too often I found myself absorbed in the living Spain for its own sake rather than for the sake of its testimony to the living spirit of Goya.

If it had all ended with a pleased absorption my fault, if it were a fault, might have been condoned. But I am well aware that not only have irrelevant emotions kept breaking in but also generalisations perhaps more irrelevant still. It is no very pardonable temerity in a traveller to put in act King Lear's resolve to take upon himself the mystery of things as though he were God's spy. His good report is little less impertinent than his ill. My own temerity now astonishes me; and it may be thought that the inscription of your name in the forefront of these rash notes is the crowning temerity of all. I am assured that you, however, are not likely to misread my motive. I know that you will take this dedication for what it is—the expression of the thanks of one who came to you with no better title to your hospitality than that of "an extravagant and wheeling stranger of here and everywhere," to whom you showed a singular and memorable kindness, and who found in the hours which he spent in your company the liberal and unexpected wages of his journey.

J. E. CRAWFORD FLITCH.

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I

PÉTIT DÉJEUNER

THAT first *pétit déjeuner* in the South ! . . .

In all your subsequent journeyings abroad do you ever recapture the zest of that most deliciously heart-easing half-hour ?

Baedeker, discreetly emotional, may star and treble-star his sights and sensations—but confess (candidly now !) is there a single one of them that has ever communicated to you quite the same thrill of buoyant elation as that first apparition of the little tray, on which repose the twin jugs of coffee and milk, the fresh spirals of butter (somehow never quite sufficient for the flaky roll, the latter half of which always goes butterless), the neat cubes of sugar, the tall, thick-lipped breakfast-cup, into which is tucked the unnecessary but quite indispensable napkin ? This last, to be entirely satisfactory to the connoisseur, should be slightly coarse and towel-like in texture and terminate in an incipient fringe. But on this, the first morning of our travels, let us not become too fastidious. . . .

Had I, like Baedeker, largess of stars to scatter upon the places that have refreshed me on

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my earthly pilgrimage, I would suspend a whole galaxy of them over the Café Condal in the Rambla del Centro of Barcelona. Perhaps you prefer the Café Suiso a little higher up? It is a trifle nearer the flower market, I grant you, but being on the other side of the street it misses the morning sun, and without the morning sun *pétit déjeuner* is apt to become as unspiritual a repast as a British breakfast. Or perhaps—I had almost overlooked the possibility—you *déjeuner* in your bedroom? . . . Well, I will not condemn the practice. There is indeed much to be said for it—always provided you have exercised a careful judgment in the selection of your room. The night before, at the Hotel Falcon, they had the tactlessness to attempt to decoy me into an *habitación interior*—one, that is to say, that looked out into a kind of well, at the bottom of which was the steamy *salle à manger* and at the top, not the free heaven, but an execrable glass roof. *Qué barbaridad!* It surely needs not to be said that every self-respecting traveller insists upon a room with a French window, a balcony, the morning sun, and a view of a harbour, or a river, or a cathedral, or a public square, or, at the very least, an ample, animated street. . . .

Unquestionably the bedroom *déjeuner* has its advantages. It permits of a greater informality of toilet. It does away with the necessity of putting on one's boots—an important point, this, for in

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order to relish fully all the ease of this indolent repast, I rather fancy that it ought to be taken beslippered. Then, too, you have your books handy—for of course you are one of those who never travel without a library of select authors.

I once read an essay—I forget where—on bed-books, the sort of book to read yourself to sleep over. I wish the writer had added another on *pétit déjeuner* books. Did you say it was unsociable to read at meals? But *pétit déjeuner* is only the pretence of a meal. It has no serious intention of sustaining you. It is rather a mode of ushering in the day, a restful interval between the senseless routine of dressing and the business, or idleness, of the morning, a half-hour set apart for the clothing of the mind after it has arisen naked from the night's oblivion. That is why the choice of the *pétit déjeuner* book is so important. It is important that the mind should be clothed in the right mood. Carelessness or mistaken judgment on this account may lead to mental discomfort throughout the day. I have known a day comparatively ruined by beginning it with a delightless commentary on life by Mr John Galsworthy. On the other hand, the perusal of one of Mr Belloc's improbable adventures has sent me forth spirited and hilarious as a north-easter.

Certainly the selection of a book for the *pétit déjeuner* is not so easy a matter as of that for the pillow. The latter should be nothing more than

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a narcotic—an even current of words, rather shallow by preference, carrying the mind placidly into the harbour of sleep. Pepys's "Diary" will do very well and Swift's "Journal to Stella" still better. (Do not those occasional lapses into the babbling "little language" contain the distilled essence of poppies?) But for the morning I think we need a stimulant, a stirrup-cup to hearten us for the day's adventure. I suppose that once upon a time half Christendom got up to the tune of the matutinal psalms—at all events before the Churchmen began to adopt the sharp practice of stealing a march on the morrow by singing their matins overnight. Well, a man even in this year of the lack of grace might do worse. The psalmist tells that he was accustomed to awake right early, and, except for occasional fits of the spleen, he was as often as not in the right morning mood. He has the lark's note and surveys with a high confidence a world that is all splendour and fire and rejoicing of dawn. Like the lark he has also that note of certainty which we of the modern age sound so uncertainly. His heart is fixed, his world stablished so fast that it cannot be moved. He is splendidly affirmative, knows no misgiving, disdains proofs, blesses and bans with equal gusto. That is what makes him good company at the *pétit déjeuner*—for if we are to make anything of the day we must at any rate begin it with a certain sureness and ardour. Misgivings will

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probably have arisen before lunch, and the sky may be quite overcast by the time we sit down to the table d'hôte—so let us by all means make sure of the waking hour.

If you do not quite feel yourself to be on terms of intimacy with the Hebrew psalmist, his modern American descendant, Walt Whitman, is a recommendable substitute. He is a yet more incorrigible optimist, and can find nothing to ban under heaven. "The earth—that is sufficient; I do not want the constellations any nearer; I know they are very well where they are; I know they suffice for those who belong to them"—that is a good enough philosophy for eight o'clock in the morning. At times, it is true, his demonstrations of affection are rather overwhelming for so early an hour; he even fawns upon you; the one thing he never counts upon is the possibility of being rebuffed. And then his table manners leave much to be desired. He thumps among the coffee-cups, and so vehemently vociferates his catalogues of delight that I have often feared he would disturb the guests sleeping in the adjoining rooms. He has a fine clarion voice, but unfortunately he has never really learnt to distinguish between a song and a shout.

Browning, too, I have found to be a sociable and sanguine companion to invite to share the little breakfast. Moreover, unlike Whitman, he is never

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the same two mornings running. He has an incurable passion for dressing up, wears experimentally philosophies which he has picked up second-hand in the unlikeliest places, so that sometimes you would never guess it was he if his trick of speech did not betray him. Pangloss's gay and fair-weather garment of course sits best upon him and this is the attire that he most often affects. "God's in His heaven—all's right with the world"—it may not be true, but at any rate it gives a brisker relish to one's morning coffee and roll, and that is all one demands of the philosopher at the breakfast-table. Herrick again—But it would be too lengthy to go on particularising. You are pretty safe in sitting down with any of the English poets. They are as a whole in general agreement with their Creator and find that His creation is very good. They are optimists almost to a man. They are of the morning. They play like happy children in the garden of the world. Of late, perhaps, there has been a change of mood, and a few of our modern poets sit apart and sulk or petulantly pull the flowers to pieces. I have a private fancy that they no longer, like the bards of a less luxurious age, awake right early, but only go out into the garden when the dew has dried upon the petals of the roses and the matins of the birds are ended. While we are breakfasting, they will probably be still abed, and we need not therefore trouble to reserve a seat for them.

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I do not actually insist upon the poet's company at the *pétit déjeuner*, but I prefer him, not only on account of his cheerfulness but also because of his conciseness. In the evening an author can be as prosy as he likes—we are content to sit up with him until the fire grows grey, if his talk will keep us awake so long. In the morning, what he has to say he must say briefly, for we have one eye on the clock. He seems to be aware of this, and for our convenience abbreviates a large discourse into a little phrase, a little memorable phrase that we can carry with us throughout the day, a little musical phrase that sings itself in our head, or better still in our heart, at odd moments like the ending of a song. It is a lasting wonder to me why all busy men, and therefore, I suppose, all business men, are not habitual readers of poetry. Verse is the first of time-saving inventions. How prolix and dilatory is the leader of a morning paper in comparison with a closely-knit sonnet of Wordsworth or Milton. The leader writer's wordy rhetoric is, I take it, a survival from leisurely mid-Victorian days, which from all the accounts one hears of them must surely have been much more spacious than those of great Elizabeth. The liberal-paged *Times* was founded upon the three-course mid-Victorian breakfast. That is perhaps why its counterpart does not exist in any country that is content with so insubstantial a meal as *pétit déjeuner*.

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We will admit the prose writers then to our morning company only on condition that they be not prosy. They must be crisp as our morning roll and give us a salted phrase between every mouthful. The novelists, I am afraid, we must strike off the invitation list. They are too garrulous. Besides, if we have to break off just before Ermyintrude can make up her mind whether or not to elope or the angry parent decides to be conciliated, we are left with a preoccupation which unsettles us for the rest of the day. I am in some doubt whether we should deny the travel writers too. After all, what need have we of the picture when we can look out of the window at the sunny reality? But as a rule they talk much more about themselves than the countries they travel in. No doubt when they set out upon their travels they resolve to fix the spiritual degrees of latitude and longitude of a country. But in the end they rarely map out anything except their own heart, which, after all, is perhaps the most hazardous and unexplored continent they are likely to discover. Who cares now about the condition of Spain in the eighteen thirties? We read Borrow because he is his own hero and Spain the background against which he can most dramatically strike his romantic attitudes. Had Stevenson bastinadoed his donkey through the Vosges or the Pyrenees instead of the Cevennes we were as well content. I doubt not that Mr

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Belloc would have chanted his doggerel as cheerily and argued with the Lector as dogmatically on the path to Timbuctoo as on that to Rome. They travel not to find a foreign country but to find themselves, which is the chief use of their travelling. . . .

But where was I before this digression led me astray? The Café Condal, was it not? with the Café Suiso over the way. Yes, decidedly I give my vote in favour of the Café Condal, by which, of course, I mean the pavement immediately in front of it. Here one is in the open air, and the open air in the Rambla del Centro on a fine March morning is, to my thinking, the suavest, sweetest and freshest in Spain. For just a little higher up the street is the flower market and just a little lower down the harbour, and just in front of the Café Condal the freshness of the Mediterranean is married with the fragrance of the pouting roses.

And now as the waiter, with an extinguished cigarette dependent from his lips, places the magic tray upon the marble-topped table the moment has arrived which you have been dreaming of throughout all the thirty hours' journey from Charing Cross. "Give me my moments, you may keep your years!"—such a bargain Richard Middleton would have struck with Time. May not this, the first morning under Southern skies, be allowed its place, if but a lowly one, in the procession of the "moments"? With one supreme

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inspiration you take the freshness of the mild Southern air into your lungs, and not only into your lungs but into the driest recesses of your spirit. Care falls from you as from a schoolboy on the first morning of the holidays. At last you are at ease in the world. World, world, O world, how brave!—at any rate that fragment of it which is visible in one complacent survey from the harbour to the flower market. The light has the crystalline, dew-like brightness peculiar to the hour, so much finer in quality than the crude glare of noon. The Rambla, quiet and spacious, shows just sufficient animation to prevent you from surmising that you have risen thoughtlessly early. An electric tram, fresh from its night's repose in the depot and void of passengers, meanders leisurely past, as though it were taking a morning stroll through the city for its own recreation. An unshaven priest, with wide-brimmed, shiny beaver and cloak flung half across his face—for they distrust the shrewd morning air, these sun-pampered Southerners—paces slowly on his way to Mass, or it may be to the barber's. The boot-blacks arrange their simple apparatus on the opposite side of the street—their job a sinecure, I fancy, for surely Barcelona is too well-bred a city to sully a citizen's boots, on a fine March morning at all events. A flock of goats, with jangling bells and straddling legs, halts at a dairy near by to make their contribution

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to the petit déjeuner, reminding you that you are in a city which has not yet divorced itself from the country-side.

It is all so fresh, so reposeful, so serene. The day stretches before you, offers itself to you, bids you make what use of it you please, and the best of it is that you have nothing on earth to do except to do what you please. With what a strange wonder do you not recollect that at this very moment, if you were now at home, you would be engrossed with meats and marmalade and that embittered brew which the kitchenmaid misnames coffee, and still more embittered record of the world's mishaps, preliminary to the whirlwind hurry to the office ! How incredible, how senseless, that existence of your former self, before this blessed transmigration of your soul and body to the South ! How much more reasonable this spacious way of living, this frugal meal, this pale blue sky, this sweet, sea-scented air !

Truly, even when the morning's at eight-thirty, God's still in His heaven and all's right with the world.

“ Waiter ! ”

“ Si, señor.”

“ The morning paper.”

The habit, you see, sticks perniciously. A pernicious habit, so I have always maintained, and one that I have always practised. Abroad,

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however, newspaper reading gives me no qualms of conscience. I would even make it a point of duty for a traveller to read with diligence the local paper of the city he sojourns in : advertisements, lottery results, funeral announcements and all, provided it is printed in a rational language, based upon the common mother tongue of Rome, which permits of being read with the help of a pocket dictionary. There is more in a city than is contained between the covers of a guide-book ; and its monuments, however splendid or venerable, cannot compete in interest with its contemporary life. Do not imagine that you can overhear its secrets by haunting its dim cathedral or lingering by starlight in its dumb deserted squares ; to know its inmost thoughts—what is agitating its mind, what throes of civic crisis it is passing through, what it is saying about its local rulers, what it thinks of the play, the bull-fight, the cinematograph show, what, in a word, is its verdict upon life—you must subscribe to its local paper. It is the best way of making yourself feel at home in a foreign city that I know of. After a morning or two you begin to strike roots ; in a week you find yourself becoming a partisan in the municipal squabbles ; before the month is out you are a citizen.

The waiter reappears without a paper. A shade of perplexity and embarrassment deepens on his face. He seems to search for a form of words.

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“ Pardon, señor, but—would you prefer the organ of the Liberals or the Republicans ? ”

Now a plague on both your parties ! At so serene an hour as this must I be vexed with the wranglings of politicians and elect between modes of government ? At this moment I condemn, abhor and anathematise all parties, individually and collectively. Or if it truly be that adhesion to a party is obligatory in this party-ridden city of Barcelona, why, then, I hereby declare that I belong to the party of the *pétit déjeuner*—our programme a free breakfast-table—coffee, rolls, napkin, a marble-topped table, limitless leisure, pale blue sky and the scent of roses for everyone ! Down with the three-course breakfast in the stale and illiberal *salle à manger* ! Vive le *pétit déjeuner en plein air* !

But the waiter is still waiting. Now are my sentiments liberal or republican this morning ? Neither the one nor the other, I fear, for the world, at any rate as seen from the pavement in front of the *Café Condal*, seems to be already moulded near enough to the heart's desire. Another touch of the reformer's hand and the pleasing effect might be destroyed. But I must have the local paper. Very well then, let us see what it feels like to be a revolutionary.

“ *El Republicano.* ”

“ *Bien, señor.* ”

The waiter dives into the *café* and emerges with a journal entitled *El Diluvio*—the Deluge.

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But surely, *après nous le Déluge !* I had always supposed that the Deluge was one of those things with which man never is but always to be blest, a kind of inverted millennium reserved for our remote descendants. In Barcelona it would appear that it had already arrived. Dear me ! and how little everything is changed. A republican city council, socialist deputies in the Córtes, anti-clerical demonstrations every Sunday afternoon in the park (weather and the governor permitting), the social war joined all along the line and a general strike momentarily impending—and yet the streets are as tranquil, the airs as sweet, the roses as fresh, as in the most catholic days of the Catholic Kings !

Courage, timorous hearts ! Could you but be sitting with me this morning outside the Café Condal you would cease to take anxious thought for the morrow. You would recollect, as I recollected, sitting there at the marble-topped table, many elementary truths which, if we had learnt our lessons better, we should never have forgotten. For me the red flag has no longer any terrors—beyond perhaps a merely physical exacerbation of the optic nerve. I know that the impartial breeze will caress its vermilion folds as fondly as ever it caressed the royal standard. However dismal the social deluge, I know that the ancient heavens will be not one whit less serene ; the roses will bloom indifferent to the fall of dynasties, and the

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morning coffee and rolls, though doled out to us by the socialist State, will taste, I trow, not less delicious than before. (I only pray they will not take our napkin from us.) The simple, the elemental, the essential things of life are based on foundations that even the revolutionary can never overthrow. The crystal light, the morning freshness, the song of birds, the scent of roses, the delight of the seeing eye and the hearing ear and the quick senses, are beyond the reach of legislation. Youth and love and beauty and whatever else is at the core of life are indestructible. The human heart is fixed, the natural world stablished so fast that it cannot be moved. If the devil was the first Whig, and for my part I don't believe it, Nature was assuredly the first Conservative. Courage, timorous hearts ! we are on the winning side.

If there is one thing that is likely to convert me to republicanism it is *El Diluvio*. It is the most seductive news-sheet in the world. In the first place, it is just the size that a newspaper ought to be, about as large as a largish sheet of notepaper, or shall we say royal octavo ?—no, perhaps we had better say republican octavo. I can't think why our Northcliffes and Cadburys have left it to the republicans of Barcelona to make this easy discovery. To anyone who has ever attempted to prop up *The Times* against a breakfast-cup or battled with a mutinous *Morning Post* on the

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windy top of an omnibus the superiority of the reduced dimensions of *El Diluvio* will be at once apparent. (I have been careful to preserve the exact measurements, and now publish them for the benefit of any English newspaper proprietor who is ready to profit by my suggestion: they are nine inches by five and three-quarters.) But altogether apart from the practical consideration of size, there is something indescribably ingratiating in the format of this little journal. It has the most confidential, intimate and private air imaginable. It slips into your hand as though it were a letter from a friend, for has it not that occasional illegibility and those endearing lapses of orthography which none but a friend would allow himself? It appears to have been written expressly for you. It has nothing in common with those vociferous, impersonal, largest-circulation newspapers which you are compelled to share with half-a-million readers. Is it not a little humiliating to be shouted at in batches of half-a-million? One's *amour-propre* seems to demand a more personal attention. *El Diluvio* understands and respects this egoistical weakness. It takes you aside, whispers its telegraphic and telephonic confidences into your private ear, treats you as a friend and a republican. I no longer go away dashed and depressed when the clerk distributing letters at the *poste restante* dismisses me with a shake of the head. I know that I have a

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correspondent who has been sitting up all night to write to me, and that his letter will appear bright and punctual as the morning sun.

“L'exilé partout est seul” — no, Monsieur Lammenais, not when he has *El Diluvio* to keep him company at his petit déjeuner.

II

HOLY WEEK

"BUT what are you doing, pray, idling over your *pétit déjeuner* on the pavement outside the Café Condal in the Rambla del Centro of Barcelona? I understood that this was to be a Goya pilgrimage. Is it not a fact that Goya never set foot in Barcelona and that Barcelona contains only one of his works, "Bulls," No. 320 in the Museo Municipal? Come, let us go and look at it and then we can move on to some more agreeable city."

Ah, I see you have been studying your Baedeker, prudent and impatient reader. But let me tell you something you weren't aware of—to-day is Good Friday, a public holiday and a day on which even a republican city council will not permit us to inspect works of art. If we were to go to the Museo Municipal we should find it closed.

"Then why, since you profess to know something about Spanish habits, did you arrange to stay at Barcelona in Holy Week?"

Pardon, dear reader, I did not arrange it. The clerk who registered my luggage in Paris arranged it for me. My personal intention was not to stay at Barcelona at all, but to arrive at Zaragoza in

HOLY WEEK

time to view the Jueves Santo procession on Thursday evening.

“Then why did you so mismanage your affairs as to allow your plans to be interfered with by the registration clerk at Paris ? ”

Your pardon once again, but I hold that the traveller's affairs are never mismanaged when he allows Fate to manage them for him. Fate has many deputies and, as it turned out, the clerk who concerned himself with my luggage in Paris was of the number. But I am glad you asked the question, for it affords me the opportunity of introducing to you my circulating library.

“Another digression ? ”

I fear so. This is likely to be but a desultory pilgrimage at best. Madrid is its very secular goal and I confess I am not feverish to reach it. Moreover, since you have consented to accompany me as my fellow-pilgrim, I shall insist on gossiping to you by the way. Need I remind you that there is yet time to turn back ?

I think I told you that I never travelled without a selection of select authors. By this admission I did not mean to imply that I merely slipped a favourite volume or two into the unoccupied corners of a portmanteau. The selection swells out almost into the dimensions of a library. I had a box made specially to hold it. This box is really a triumph of the box-maker's art, strong as a safe, neat as a coffin. It is made of good old English

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heart-of-oak, the right stuff of which the “ wooden walls ” were built. All that they fought to preserve—the life and spirit of this sceptred isle, this other Eden, this demi-paradise, this England!—is packed within its narrow compass. Twenty-eight inches by twelve, it isn’t much if you carry the scale of the Bodleian in your eye. But you can’t measure a literature in terms of cubic content.

Light literature it is in no sense of the word—as perspiring porters have affirmed on oath in half the languages of Europe. The sorry hacks of Paris have doubtless cursed it in their equine argot; the diligences of Southern Spain have rocked beneath it; the panting upstream steamers of the Rhine have snorted out their protest; the long-suffering mules of Italy have reproached it with sad and tearful eyes; it has been the last straw upon the camel’s back. Neither can it be called cheap literature. Nobody will touch it under a couple of francs. It is voracious of the paper currency of Southern Europe and I have known occasions when its appetite was unappeasable except with gold. Indeed, the continental railway companies may be said to batten upon it. To the utilitarian souls of registration clerks it is merely excess luggage—as if there could be any excess of the weighty stuff that it contains!

Of all the traveller’s impedimenta it is the most vexatious. It begins to involve its owner

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in difficulties at the *douane* (*aduana*, *dogana* or *Zollhaus* as the case may be). Perhaps its passage through the *aduana* is the most difficult of all, for the Spanish custom-house officer is the most inquisitive of the nature of the privacies of the traveller's goods and chattels. As soon as it touches foreign soil its plain, honest, British, workmanlike character appears to desert it. You might almost swear it began to have a suspicious, double-dealing, touch-me-not look about it. Perhaps in contrivances such as this alien immigrants conceal their bombs or pirates their pieces-of-eight. Tobacco or cigars? No, señor, though its contents are more soothing. Spirit?—not of the kind you mean, my friend, though it can set both brain and heart on fire. Wine?—the only vintage we can boast about in England. Lace, scent, a patent medicine?—fragrant are the wares it holds, and healing too, yet are they none of these vanities! *Caramba!* what then does it contain? Words, señor, words, golden and jewelled words. The sword-begirt Cerberus smiles with polite incredulity. Not so easily is the official intelligence to be duped. *Vamos á ver*—let's see! The box is unstrapped and unlocked, the lid uplifted and to the mistrustful, unillumined eye of the Spanish functionary is displayed the imperial treasury of England. Thick, tobacco-stained fingers fumble upon Herrick's "Hesperides" and open at the pages at "The Tempestuous Petticoat." The light of

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understanding dawns upon his brow. *Vaya ! usted es viajante*—a commercial traveller. *Ejemplos, esos*. Samples ? Yes, my friend, samples of the paradisaical ware we once manufactured in that demi-paradise, that England !

But that encounter was on a former pilgrimage. This time, in order to punish me for the omission of one of those infinitesimal formalities, which loom so infinitely large in the mind of the petty official, it seemed good to the clerk who registered my luggage that my circulating library should cease to circulate at the Gare de Lyon. The prospect of so many solitary *pétits déjeuners* appalled me—that was before I had made the acquaintance of *El Diluvio*, remember. I decided therefore to wire to Paris and wait in Barcelona until such time as my breakfast companions should be released from their strict durance in the dim *bureau des bagages* of the Gare de Lyon.

I was not sorry to have to wait, because I like Barcelona. It is, as everybody knows, the Manchester of Spain, but a Manchester with a mediæval core. I confess I have seldom any wish to wander beyond the limits of this central heart, with its great artery, the Rambla, and the little side streets where the confidential cafés are. I know that just at the head of the Rambla lies an aggressively modern suburb, with desolate boulevards and Post-Impressionist houses, and beyond that an outer ring of throbbing factories, but the knowledge

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does not disturb me. I rather rejoice to feel the pulses of modern life beating here healthily, feverishly at times, for a town that has factories can never petrify into a museum, and for my part I prefer a thousand times the atmosphere of factories to that of museums.

On this afternoon of Jueves Santo, or Maundy Thursday, therefore, I plunged into the tortuous, chasm-like streets south of the cathedral and soon found myself in the little square in front of Santa Maria del Mar. The sea which once washed its steps has long ago receded, leaving the beautiful Gothic church stranded in a slum, but it still remains what it always has been, the church of the people of the port. I entered and found myself in that thick darkness which is the characteristic of almost all Spanish churches and of Catalonian churches in particular. At first I saw nothing but the shine of a thousand candles ranged row upon row on a kind of scaffolding erected staircase-wise—the *Monumento*, symbolic of the Tomb once sealed in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. Then I perceived that the church held a close-packed mob of people. That fact was not surprising, since it was the afternoon of Jueves Santo. But surprising certainly were the shrill and unceasing noises that echoed through the building. All the ragged children of the quarter were squatting upon the floor and on the steps of the side chapels. The little infants shrieked their inarticulate grief at

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topmost pitch; those that had learnt the art of quarrelling quarrelled with that infantile ferocity which has the will but happily not the wit to wound; the elder urchins were armed with wooden hammers, like the heads of croquet mallets, with which they beat a monotonous tattoo upon the flagstones that covered the graves of the dead, sleeping their unwakeable sleep below. This universal provision of hammers puzzled me for some time, as I never remembered having seen Spanish children play such a game before, until, chancing to look at a cross decorated with the emblems of the Passion, I read in the hammer and nails the easy answer to the riddle. A practice which has questionless descended from the Middle Ages, for it was surely only that age of grown-up children, with their happy gift of innocent irreverence, that could have devised out of a weapon of such sad, sinister significance a toy for children's chubby fists. The few who were hammerless whirled rasping wooden rattles round their heads with all the child's rapture in pure unmeaning noise. The body of the church was black with masses of kneeling and crouching figures, trampled upon by other masses which thronged in continually through the open doors. And from somewhere within an enclosed choir came the drone of priests imperturbably chanting the Tenebræ. Such a promiscuous din, such heat of human bodies, such nerve-shattering distraction,—it

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seemed a ghastly kind of wake to keep for the Crucified.

I believe that it is not uncommon for a priest to ask the would-be convert to Catholicism if he has ever travelled in Southern Europe. The implication would seem to be, "Do you really know the worst?" I understand now the relevance of the inquiry. I can conceive that the northern Christian, bred in traditions of decorous and perhaps somewhat frigid devotion, entering Santa Maria del Mar on this afternoon of Jueves Santo, might experience a certain difficulty in accommodating his own slightly tentative and rarefied belief to this gross, unthinking, violent acceptance of the supernatural. So far from feeling himself to be a co-religionist, he would unconsciously assume the attitude of a detached and possibly contemptuous spectator. "This is not my religion," he would comment, "this is paganism." Probably it is, and I, for my part, bear it no ill will on that account. "Pagan" and "human" have always seemed to me all but synonymous terms, and of equally endearing import. There is a sense in which the Catholic Church may be said to be the only pagan institution which has come down into our times alive. Catholicism, it has been said, "transubstantiates" paganism, keeping the accidents, changing the substance. It takes on itself the clothes, the regalia, of the old gods into whose temples it enters. In particular it has preserved

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that peculiarly pagan sense of the crowd. A crowd there may be in a Protestant temple, but it is a crowd in a different sense, a congeries of individuals, each drawn by his separate conscience or intelligence, for purposes of his own, lacking something of solidarity. The Catholic crowd, at all events so far as countries still predominantly Catholic are concerned, yet owns kinship with the pagan populace of the cities of the ancient world when they gathered round the local altars, *en masse* and as of course, on the high days of festival. Even here, in anti-clerical Barcelona, the Church had flung a wide net and gathered in not the members of a sect but the whole populace of the port. The festival bore legibly the stamp of a popular act. It was a family gathering on a grand scale, informal, tolerant, even hilarious, as such gatherings are apt to be, and the children hammering on the gravestones with their wooden mallets went unreprieved, for were they not doing their part in their childish unconsidering way? Here was all the crowd's violence, the crowd's lack of restraint—but is it not the warmth of these rude embraces of humanity that keeps a Church alive?

Half suffocated, yet somehow strangely refreshed, I emerged from this saturating bath of humanity, and was caught up in the current of people who were going from church to church, visiting the *Monumentos*. As it flowed westwards

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the crowd grew denser, and just where the Calle de Fernando VII. debouches into the Rambla it ceased to flow at all and became impenetrable. A funereal music came sobbing down the street, and then defiled before my eyes the most lamentable procession I have ever seen. Lamentable were the waxwork groups representing the protagonists of the Drama which the day commemorated. Lost utterly was that tradition of startling and intransigent realism which was the glory of the old Spanish statuary. In its place languished a sentimentalism, that was quite foreign to the Spanish character; but since the Spaniard rarely does anything by halves, it was a sentimentalism carried to a *reductio ad absurdum*, staggering even to a northerner, who is of necessity inoculated to the sentimental. Most lamentable of all was the regiment of mock Roman soldiers, flesh and blood performers these, with their glued-on whiskers and moustaches and pink fleshings hired from the theatre for the evening. The captain of this grotesque band was of a mongrel breed, between a Norse Viking and a Red Indian chief, his head swallowed up in an inverted soup-tureen of a helmet, with a tail of cock's feathers streaming down his back. I was scarcely surprised to hear a sneering Cockney exclamation behind me. "Do they call this a religious procession?" The cynical Barcelona crowd, however, took it all in good part, and even complied so

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far as to uncover when the lamentable Christ passed by.

It was with some curiosity that I opened the copy of *El Diluvio* which the waiter handed to me outside the Café Condal to see what bright shafts of satire my republican correspondent had unloosed overnight. Certainly the target was broad enough. Here we are ! “ The day of Jueves Santo,” his letter begins, “ has demonstrated this year more eloquently than ever before that Barcelona is a city on the march, for which traditionalism is definitely a dead letter. . . . The procession was witnessed by a large number of curious people, and we say ‘ curious ’ because they were nothing more than that. As an example of this, when the Canopy passed the corner of the Rambla and the Calle de Fernando (where naturally the press of people was the thickest), not a single citizen uncovered.” Decidedly *El Diluvio* is an incorrigible liar ! For it was precisely at that corner that I was standing, and although I do not pretend that I observed the motions of everybody in the crowd, I was somewhat surprised to find every head around me uncovered, with the exception of that of one citizen immediately in front, whose unsubmitive billycock hat partially obscured my view. Which suggests the thought, how shall historians decide when eye-witnesses disagree ? The writer continues his account of the day as he

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chose to view it. "Instead of quiet recollection, tumult ; instead of silence, the noise of carriages and tramways ; instead of faith in drab clothes, the bright incredulity of a people animated by the joy of life ; instead of companies of the faithful breathing the vitiated air of churches, hundreds of families going into the country to enjoy the wholesome breezes ; instead of the hieratic cult of images, the rational cult of Nature : such was the picture yesterday to be seen in our progressive city. In effect, the gods are going. Faith dies in the disillusion of the citizens and the city turns her back on traditionalism and her face towards progress. What more ? In the crowded Calle de Fernando, almost in front of the Church of San Jaime, an ambulatory pianist played airs out of *La Bohème*, and at the same time walked past Don Román Fabra, wearing light-coloured trousers, a democratic short jacket and without a top hat (*vestido de pantalón clara, democrática americana y sin chistera*)."

Decidedly a city on the march, and who could better lead the vanguard than the innovating Don Román, who wears his democratic heart upon his sleeve and announces his bright incredulity in the hue of his trousers ?

Perhaps after all it was a rather shrewd idea of the registration clerk at the Gare de Lyon to compel me to begin my Goya pilgrimage at Barcelona, for here we are at the very outset in

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the Goya atmosphere, the atmosphere of anti-clericalism. In Goya's time, some hundred years ago, the fashion was but newly come into Spain, and was recognisable by its Voltairean cut. To-day it is the common wear in the towns, and by no means uncommon in the country. A present-day phenomenon not altogether confined to Spain, did you remark ? True, but in other countries the garb of compromise is more the thing, a blend of liberal thought with ancient precedent ; or if the bitter antagonism is present none the less, it is at any rate localised, kept within the ring, exercising itself on fixed occasions and in rounds of limited duration. In Spain there is neither truce nor neutral territory. The cleavage of religion cuts right across the field of politics. There is no such thing, so far as I know, as a Conservative who is a professed unbeliever, or a Republican who is a professing Catholic. Hume, the Tory sceptic, and Acton, Catholic and apostle of liberty, would both alike be barely conceivable by the Spanish mind. If you wish to wear the jacket of democracy, you must also don the loud trousers of incredulity. The party system, with its arbitrary dual division, is senseless enough, when you consider that there are not merely two but more likely two hundred debatable questions to be solved, and that each of these questions has not simply two sides but a variety of separate facets ; but when, having manfully pronounced the party shibboleth, you

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are subjected to the further test of a religious creed, affirmative or negative as the case may be, the system becomes one such as must make wise men laugh and angels weep. Why, because I hold certain views as to the nature of hereditary monarchy, must I also hold certain other views as to the nature of the Deity? And not only is the whole field of politics made the arena of religious feud, but there is scarcely an incident of ordinary life too insignificant to be wrangled over by the rival factions. We have seen how the modest garments of Don Román Fabra can become a kind of gonfalon for the forces of "progress." So too I remember, on the occasion of the anniversary of Constantine's Edict of Toleration, when the Clericals adorned their balconies with paper roses, the Radical Press published diatribes against the execrable and degraded taste discovered in the use of artificial flowers, to which the Conservative organs must needs reply by extolling their decorative possibilities. It is this interpenetration of politics with religious rancour which makes one despair of the social progress of Spain. She has yet to learn, if the outsider may be allowed expression of his opinion, that the conscience of the citizen should be no less private than his ballot-paper. The only result can be confusion when the ancient landmarks between the things that are God's and the things that are Cæsar's are obliterated.

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But this mood of remonstrance scarcely befits the day. After all it was *El Diluvio* that began it—but how should my correspondent have known that I was standing there at the corner of the Rambla ready to trip him up on that little matter of the uncovered heads? No doubt he wrote with the sole desire to please. But let us stroll along to the Cathedral—perhaps we shall be just in time to witness the sad spectacle of the faith expiring in the disillusion of the citizens.

Barcelona Cathedral is an unsatisfactory place for witnessing spectacles of any kind. Its gloom I have no quarrel with, but I can never forgive the Spanish chapters for the erecting in the middle of the nave of those solid, selfish *coros*, which destroy the Gothic perspective and diminish the effect of the ritual pageantry. Traditionalism, it seems, is not yet so dead that it cannot fill this great building with worshippers, even on a morning when the wholesome breezes blow invitingly from the Tibidabo—the hill that commands so fair and far a prospect that it suggests itself as the scene of the Tempter's unavailing bribe, *Haec omnia tibi dabo*. It is just possible, however, to squeeze into that central space between the *coro* and the high altar. Here we must stand an hour or two, for the Spaniard is not yet accustomed to the luxury of pews. We must stand throughout the long recital of that great last chapter of the Christian story, or rather the

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penultimate chapter, for not until Easter morning shall we hear the climax. And yet, although it is an oft-told tale, told now in a foreign tongue, with what tremendous interest we listen. The recital is impressive and dramatic. Three priests mount into three separate pulpits. One is the storyteller, who recites in a clear key, with somewhat elaborate conventional modulations, the merely narrative passages. Another represents the minor dramatis personæ, Pontius Pilate, Simon Peter, the kinsman of him whose ear Peter gashed, and the rest. The third speaks for the Son of Man. This last has the most marvellous voice I have ever heard, sonorous as a deep-toned bell, yet capable of the subtlest inflections, now stern with a kind of defiance, now tremulous beneath the weight of the heart's bitterness. The speaker who impersonated Pilate speaks, quite naturally I am sure, with a shrill, slightly cynical intonation, which seems not unfitting to the part. "*Quid est veritas?*"—some might have smiled to hear the shrewd interrogation echoing down the aisles of this Catholic cathedral—unanswered. Deliberately, unrelentingly, the drama is unrolled. The articulation is so distinct that not a syllable is lost, and at times the Latin phrasing, pronounced by a Spanish tongue, approaches so closely to the native idiom that I cannot but think that to the most unlettered of the hearers the drift of the momentous dialogue must be explicit. Then from

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time to time the choir, high up in a loft in the transept, bursts in startlingly with the exclamations of the crowd, impatiently expostulating, "Not this man, but Barabbas," clamouring with sullen reiteration, "Away with Him, away with Him." At last, in a palpable silence, the sighing "*Sitio*" (I thirst) is breathed, and then the irrevocable "*Consummatum est*," quite terrible in its intensity, so that, even had the rubric not prescribed the action, I think that at these words the whole congregation would inevitably have fallen to their knees.

Could anything be simpler? Yet could you imagine any form of presenting the drama that would be more moving? I have never seen Oberammergau's treatment of the Passion, but I do not think that its realism can so purge the spirit with terror and pity as do the conventions of the Mass of the Presanctified. I could not help wondering whether this were not perhaps the closest approximation to the mode of the Greek drama that is to be seen in our time. The actors, if one may call them so, strictly suppressed any attempt at personal expression. No Greek actor with his mask could have been more impassive than they. They spoke, chanted rather, according to the prescriptions of a fast convention. They impressed upon the characters the quality not so much of individuals as of universal types. The choir might suggest the Greek chorus, but in this

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case, so far from contemplating the action with the responsive emotions of the ideal spectator, it was a vehement participator in it. The true chorus was to be found in the auditors, who responded, dumbly indeed but with a collective gesture more speaking than words, to the significance of the drama.

“In effect, the gods are going,” wrote the journalist. And elsewhere it is written, “Behold, the world is gone after Him.” Two voices—and Spain listens with divided interest, hesitant. . . .

III

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ZARAGOZA—or, if you wish to pass for a Castilian *pur sang*—Tharagotha.

I had been told that the lisping of the z's and c's was going out of fashion. I was sorry to hear it. Such minor national mannerisms possess an agreeable flavour, and if I had my will not one jot or tittle of them should ever pass away. Insignificant in themselves, collectively they form a barrier which serves to retard a while the incoming tide of internationalisation (hateful word), the drab deluge that threatens to obliterate all personal distinctions in a tediously affable brotherhood of man. For my part, I shrink from the prospect of a world of blood relations—I like to discover in my friends a note of strangeness, a dissimilarity from myself, be it only in the contrary pronunciation of a consonant. Consider, too, what an innocent gratification it affords the tourist, newly returned from his fortnight's excursion in the Peninsula, to be able to rectify his home-staying friends' well-meaning "Saragossa," muffling the hissing sibilants with a soothing lisp. Does it not give him the authentic cachet of

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the traveller, as of one who knows Spain from within ?

The excursionist need have no fear. He is not immediately to be denied the pleasurable exercise of this artless trick. Zaragoza still lisps. The porter at the station lisps ; the cabman lisps ; the waiter at the café lisps ; the newsvendors lisp ; the street urchins lisp ; the very infants in arms lisp—these last being doubtless unable to frame their speech otherwise. The whole syntax of the Castilian tongue appears to merge itself in one general, indistinguishable lisp—so appears, at any rate, to the traveller fresh from Catalan Barcelona, where the lisp is not a universal habit but exists, as in more northern latitudes, merely as a private infirmity.

In Spain it is the general custom of the railways to keep at a respectful distance from the cities which the maps in the time-tables would suggest that they passed through. It is as though with a sense of delicacy, unusual in railways, they shrank from disturbing with their shrieking and grinding modernity these haunts of ancient peace. Upon this graceful consideration for the spirit of the past thrives a rude army of bus drivers, fly drivers, and drivers of vehicles of more ambiguous and questionable shape. Outside the railway station at Zaragoza this army is drawn up in well-ordered array, and assaults the traveller with singular precision of attack. The regiment of hotel porters advances as a single man. I can

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scarcely believe that there are as many hotels in Zaragoza as there are porters. Can it be that they are really only supers, employed by an ambitious municipality to impose upon the stranger and force from him a recognition of the city's claims to be the rightful capital of all the Spains? Or is hotel-keeping the staple industry of Zaragoza and do the inhabitants gain a livelihood by taking one another in as guests?

“Hotel de France!”

The guide-books omit to make mention of it, but I had not forgotten the warmth of enthusiasm with which a young Frenchman, whom I had met at Barcelona, spoke of it—its *filles de chambres*, their amiability, their unsophisticated fondness for caramels. So gay a picture had his flying fancies painted that, as I confronted the regiment of porters, I half expected to see a smiling chambermaid emerge from the ranks, and half regretted that I had neglected to provide myself with a store of the propitiatory sweetmeats. But no one advanced to greet me. As I repeated my confident summons the Cuatro Naciones looked at the Europa and shook his head, the Continental shrugged his shoulders at the España. At last the Unión imparted the dismaying information:

“There is no Hotel de France, señor, in Zaragoza.”

I could have pretty nearly any other nationality

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I liked, it appeared, with the unspecified Four Nations thrown in. But France, no ! And it was precisely France that I wanted. So runs the world away, does it not, my masters ? Whether this kindly hostelry actually exists somewhere in the labyrinth of Zaragoza, concealing its identity under an alias, or whether in some more favoured city of the Peninsula it dispenses the hospitality of la belle France, I regret I cannot inform the inquiring reader. For me it remains the elect among hotels. But I know I shall never find it. Do I therefore regret its obscurity ? No, I think I would rather have it as it is, built only in my dreams, its tricolour smiling from the roof, its phantom chambermaids smiling from the balconies, secure from the disillusionising touch of fact. Should I chance to discover it, I might find that its *filles de chambre* had taken wings, or—who knows ?—they might reject my proffered caramels.

“Lion d’Or !”

Baedeker’s recommendations, if dictated by less romantic considerations, are more reliable. When it is a question of chambermaids, the sober Karl looks the other way, or if indeed they come within the purview of his all-observing eye, as assuredly they must, he is too admirably discreet to publish his observations upon them or even to betray their presence by a star. The only information he vouchsafes regarding the Lion

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d'Or is that it is unpretending. How infallible the man is ! What could be more unpretending than the dim individual, a six days' growth upon his chin, frayed tennis shoes upon his feet, who started from his repose at the unaccustomed summons of the name which he bore in tarnished letters upon his cap ? He smiled an unpretending smile—of gratitude, perhaps, at being preferred, like the humble guest at the feast in the parable, before those who had rashly presumed to take the foremost places, the pretentious, gold-laced minions of the Europa and the Cuatro Naciones. The bus ? Oh no, the Lion d'Or did not pretend to a bus. It was necessary to take a vehicle inscribed "Despacho Central," a decayed conveyance patronised by the less successful among the commercial travellers.

Properly speaking, the Despacho Central is not a bus, but a corridor, hermetically sealed with wooden shutters. To lend cohesion to its abnormal length, it is braced together in the midst by an iron girder, which projects half-a-foot above the level of the floor, but which the twilight obscurity of the interior conceals from sight. By means of this device the hasty passenger is neatly floored, with all his bags and baggage, and the representative of the Lion d'Or smiles more unpretendingly than ever. It is a trick that he has never known to fail, and one that serves, no doubt, to brighten daily his somewhat dim and tarnished existence.

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And now one begins to wish that the railway had been a trifle less scrupulous in respecting the privacy of Zaragoza and had presumed to draw a little nearer to its centre. One could have desired one's introduction to the imperial city of Cæsar Augustus to have taken place under happier conditions. True, the distress of the introductory drive is not peculiar to Zaragoza, or for that matter even to Spain. It is one of the unredressed grievances of foreign travel. The traveller's entry into the city of his election should be a joyous entry, a triumphal entry. He should advance in noiseless comfort down noble thoroughfares, on either side of which the city has massed her cathedrals, palaces and public monuments to fill his admiring eye. But only in Utopia—and Venice—are matters so well ordered. Mindful of the fact that first impressions leave lasting memories, cities should be careful of the appearance they present to the stranger they are about to welcome. Unfortunately they are nearly all slatterns. They greet us in deshabelle ; they flaunt before our averted eyes their disreputable outskirts ; they seem to insist perversely that we shall first explore their shabbiness and squalor and become acquainted with the harsh accent of their slums. Perhaps that is why the Despacho Central is hermetically sealed. It would screen us if it could from these disastrous first impressions. But alas ! though it can blinker our eyes it cannot

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seal our ears. Unpretentious in its outward aspect, the Despacho Central, when once it has launched into motion, proceeds with an awful majesty of sound, announcing its advent streets ahead by a succession of catastrophic detonations. Its immense iron-tired wheels smite upon the flinty cobbles, leaving behind them a vivid trail of sparks ; its double set of glass and wooden windows rattle like the rifle-fire of a hotly contested engagement ; its sides, joints, hinges, axles, brakes, groan and shriek in the agony of transit ; the traveller's trunks beat the devil's tattoo upon its roof ; the myriad bells upon its mules burst into shrill carillons of insane mirth ; and above all the amazing din howls the demented being, exploding his whip like pistol-shots, into whose hands the lives of the quavering inhabitants of that dim interior are momentarily confided.

No brand-new, modern-comfort, cosmopolitan Grand Hotel, with polyglot porter in the vestibule and asphyxiating heating apparatus in the bedroom, for me. Give me the traditional Spanish *fonda*, chill, vast, mouldering, crepuscular, exhaling a blend of garlic and the odour of the past. Of such a kind is the Lion d'Or. In it, indeed, the dainty-stomached traveller might veritably die "in aromatic pain," but the man of stronger nostrils can thrive and be happy there. Its proportions are generous, as befits the spacious age that built it, its staircases broad and shallow,

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its floors tiled and undulating, its passages endlessly ramifying, its windows shuttered with massive doors, fit to sustain a siege. It is dim, dusty, decaying, but is not the decay of the Lion d'Or more majestic than the sumptuousness of its upstart cosmopolitan rivals? It is tragic in its conjunction of the squalid and the palatial. And it is untenanted—for the forlorn abandonment of this ancient hostelry which once, I am sure, entertained the Spanish grandees of the old régime and the English milords of the Regency, posting up and down the Peninsula with their splendour and their spleen, can never be adequately filled by the few commercial travellers upon whose patronage it has now declined.

Zaragoza, the Ever Heroical and Immortal Zaragoza, *siempre heroica é immortal*, for so it magniloquently announces itself in the placards relating to rates and taxes which the municipality affixes to the walls, capital of Aragon and scene of the youthful studies and exploits of Francisco Goya y Lucientes. That reminds me—I had almost forgotten Goya. And after all it is Goya who has brought me to Zaragoza. I must rouse myself from dreaming of the vanished glories of the Lion d'Or and set about seeking traces of the great master. And surely the first shrine of my pilgrimage should be his birthplace in the neighbouring hamlet of Fuendetodos.

I ring the bell. Ring, did I say? The bells of the

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Lion d'Or rang their last peal a century ago. The bell-pull still remains as a decorative line upon the damp and stencilled walls, but the bell no longer responds to the pull, be it never so urgent. I clap my hands. Echo claps hers and echo after echo, until the remotest passages of the *fonda* resound with a ghostly hand-clapping. It is as if all the ghosts of all the guests who had ever like myself been baffled by those unresponsive bells were mocking me. But no living soul approaches, not even the spectral Juan in his noiseless tennis shoes. Descending to the Comedor (no *salle à manger* here) I discover Juan, his head prone upon the white tablecloth, sleeping, after the fashion of porters and waiters, who appear never to get a whole meal of sleep, but take their repose in snatches, when and where they can. It seems harsh to abbreviate his brief oblivion, but—

“Can you tell me where Fuendetodos is?”

“Fuendetodos, Fuendetodos.” He repeats the word as though it were the meaningless refrain of a ballad.

“Yes, a little village not far from Zaragoza, famous as the birthplace of Goya.”

“Who?”

“Goya—Don Francisco Goya y Lucientes.”

“Lucientes, Lucientes—him that keeps the tobacco shop in the Calle de——”

Honour comes as hardly to painters as to prophets, it seems, in their own country.

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Perhaps the local time-table might be better informed than the somnolent Juan. But not so. Fuendepiedra it knew, and many other Fuentes, but it too had never heard of Fuendetodos.

It was then that I bethought me of my passport, which "requested and required in the Name of his Majesty all whom it might concern to afford the bearer every assistance and protection of which he might stand in need."

"I will go to his Majesty's Vice-Consul," I said, "and request and require him in his Majesty's name to tell me whereabouts is Fuendetodos. In the face of so august a summons he will not keep back from me the truth."

He kept me waiting, however, longer than it seemed to me that a mere Vice-Consul should, and when at last he came, after giving me one business-like glance from hat to boots, he inquired laconically, "Well, what are your troubles?"

Is it necessary then to be one that has had troubles, before invoking the assistance of a British Vice-Consul?

"Troubles, dear sir? Why, none to speak of—unless it be a few secret ones beyond the curing of any vice-consul under heaven. But the only trouble with which I propose to trouble you is that of knowing how to get to Fuendetodos."

"And why do you wish to go to Fuendetodos? There's no commerce there." A very practical Vice-Consul, a very proper representative of a

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people that has founded an empire largely upon the export of Manchester goods and Birmingham ware. Had he known his Tennyson he might have learnt that "we are not cotton-spinners all." But I suppose it does not come within the scope of a Vice-Consul's duties to acquaint himself with the works of the poets-laureate of the nation to which he is accredited. No, that were assuredly too stringent an obligation. I explained that my commerce was with paint and canvas, which, however, I came neither to buy nor sell, but to mark, learn and inwardly digest. The Vice-Consul had heard of Goya. He esteemed him to be a painter of merit. Me he would doubtless have esteemed more had my business borne more directly upon the question of exports and imports, but still—Fuendetodos lay some five miles away from a station on the branch line to Utrillas (alight at La Puebla de Albortón), population 531, contains a church, a constabulary office and a co-operative store, does an insignificant trade in wheat and cattle, total arable area——

Stop, stop, in his Majesty's name!—my troubles are remedied completely.

There is only one train on the branch line to Utrillas—a hard-working little train, for every day of its life, Sundays and saints' days included, it sets off from Zaragoza at 7.30 A.M., puffs up the eighty-mile incline to Utrillas, arrives there at

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1.17 P.M., and then, allowing you just thirty-five minutes to lunch and see the sights of the town, at 1.52 whistles you back to the station, shuts off steam and slides back home again. This train is more like an expensive model toy than any other train I ever came across. Properly speaking, it consists only of an engine and a single coach, the latter neatly divided into two compartments, on the respective doors of which are painted the numerals I. and III., in order to remove any question in the mind of the traveller as to whether the compartment furnished with eight cushioned arm-chairs is really the first class and that provided with rows of wooden benches the third. But, as though fearing that to arrive at Utrillas with only one coach in tow might suggest doubts as to its seriousness of purpose, it adds to its weight and dignity by taking on a complement of goods trucks, each fitted with a little wooden tower, presumably to afford the brakesman a more extended view of the scenery on the route. To be sure there are no goods in the trucks, but this is a secret deficiency which only those who are inquisitive enough to put their noses over the side and look in are likely to discover. It was somewhat surprising to find that the branch line was provided with miniature tunnels, bridges and signal boxes, all complete—in fact everything appeared to have been thought of that could make it as much like a real railway as

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possible. It seemed a pity, after the directors had been at so much trouble and expense, that no one should want to go to Utrillas.

At 9.10 precisely, for the absence of troublesome traffic on the branch line removes the necessity for unpunctuality, I alighted at La Puebla de Albortón, or rather at a symmetrical building, such as an intelligent child might build with a well-equipped box of bricks, which was so labelled. It stood in splendid isolation in the midst of a wide and desolate plain. The railway in fact did not go to La Puebla—La Puebla must come to the railway. It was satisfactory to learn that the official who had charge of the symmetrical building had heard of Fuendetodos. “But hurry, hurry,” he cried, “the post has left a quarter of an hour ago. Alone, you will never find it. Hurry quickly and you will overtake him,” and he pointed vaguely in the direction of some distant hills.

I leapt across the little line and ran forward, stumbling over the stones of that stony wilderness. Before, behind and all around stretched the barren, tawny-hued plain, void of any sign of life. Road there was none. I strained my eyes for a glimpse of anything that might resemble a sublunary mail-cart—but as there was no road how should there be a cart? At length I descried an object, distinguishable from every other object in the plain by the fact of its being

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unmistakably in motion, which, as I gazed, resolved itself into a donkey and its rider. I quickened my pace and as I did so it seemed to me that the beast did the same. I hollo'd, but the brutal peasant on its back responded only by applying his stick more vigorously to the donkey's hinder parts. I gave eager chase, fearing that if I once lost sight of this solitary link with humankind I should be for ever lost in this uninhabited waste. Reminded of similar pursuits that I had undertaken in nightmares, with their invariably disastrous terminations, I passed from fear to despair.—It was a cigarette that saved me. In Spain, you must know, smokers rarely smoke the cigarettes which the State, in its capacity of sole tobacconist, compels them to buy—the paper in which the State wraps its cigarettes being, it appears, of a poisonous composition. Before it can be smoked, therefore, the cigarette must first be unrolled and then rerolled into a less noxious paper of private manufacture, with which the prudent smoker has taken care to provide himself. The operation takes time, but then time doesn't matter in Spain—except when your welfare hangs upon your overtaking the post in the midst of an inhospitable wilderness, when it matters intensely. By the time the rider on the donkey had succeeded in getting his cigarette well alight, I was within earshot of him.

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"Are you the post?" I called. Without looking round, the rider spat on the donkey's off-side and returned a monosyllabic but welcome answer.

"Yes."

"And are you going to Fuendetodos?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of accompanying you there."

No answer. More expectoration.

I awaited the catechism which some experience of travelling in the remoter parts of Spain had taught me to expect—where did I come from? whither was I going? what was my name, my nationality, my business? what did I sell? had I a family? how much had I paid for my trousers? But no, this was an incurious and taciturn post, a post who posted post-haste and dallied with no man on the King's highway—although it was only by a figure of speech that the King might be said to possess a highway to Fuendetodos. Then I remembered that we were in Aragon, and I recalled all I had ever read or heard of the men of Aragon—how they were a dour, hard, morose, pig-headed lot, a race of fighters, men of deeds rather than of words, partaking somewhat of the nature of the bleak, stern country from which they won a hard-earned sustenance. And of this breed was Goya himself. Judging by the specimen now before me, I deemed all that the books had

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said about the character of the Aragonese peasant well founded.

I was loath to let our conversation die thus prematurely without making some effort to prolong it, for I have found that in forbidding and solitary regions there arises a desire for human intercourse more urgent than in places where Nature is milder and not so far removed from the influence of man. The spirit seems to need the assurance of the spoken voice. And so, more for the comfort of the sound of the words than for any interest their meaning might have for my interlocutor—if one may be termed an interlocutor whose locutions are chiefly monosyllables—I remarked, “I have never been this way before. I am a foreigner.”

“That I have already clearly understood.”

A pause. The perspicacity of the man seemed to check the flow of inconsequential speech.

“Do you go to La Puebla every day?”

“Every day.”

A longer pause.

“There’s not a heavy post, I suppose, to Fuendetodos?”

“Sometimes a newspaper—to-day a post-card.”

A discouraging bag, to be sure, for so arduous a day.

The track began to climb steeply upwards, passing beneath clusters of stunted fir-trees, their

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sombre green richly burnished by the sun. The sun, scaling the hill-top, now beat strongly on our backs and flashed a painfully dazzling reflection from the chalky soil of the ravine. I began to grow tired.

“Does the road wind uphill all the way?”

(Now did I ask that question of myself, or was it a quotation?)

“Yes, to the very end.”

(Surely he must have read Christina Rossetti too.)

Now, where were we going? Fuen—Fuende—well, there would be an inn there any way.

“Will there be beds for me and all who seek?”

(That was the proper question, wasn't it?)

“Yea, beds for all who come.”

(There, he's got the answer pat again!)

How strong the sun is! I think I'll rest a little.

Of course it was all the fault of the bells of the Lion d'Or. No bell, no breakfast, and without breakfast it is not wise to pursue the post across the plain under a strong sun.

“There, a little better? Yes, the sun is strong, and it's a rough road. Now ride a little, I'll walk. That's it.”

After all, they are a kindly race, these Aragonese.

We climbed up out of the ravine and passed through some fields, in which the young green corn was pushing up out of the baked soil and the

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almond-trees were yielding their blossoms to the sun's kiss. At length we crossed the summit of the flat-topped hill and descended into a saucer-shaped valley, poised in the altitude of the sierra. In the midst of it a huddle of crumbling, earth-coloured houses clustered round a high-shouldered church, topped by two miniature cupolas. It was Fuendetodos.

The post delivered me as carefully as if I had been a registered parcel at the *posada*, for *fonda* there is none at Fuendetodos, and went his ways, no doubt to attend to the delivery of the postcard. A *fonda*, I may explain, is where you eat and sleep, a *posada* where you eat and drink merely. A restaurant, in fact?—well, yes, if the term did not seem so incongruous when applied to the primitive building into the *patio* of which, large and bare as a coach-house, I now entered.

On a low stool just inside the immense coach-house door sat a girl, working at pillow lace. On another low stool at her side sat a large woman, dressed in black, with a black silk handkerchief over her head, working at embroidery. A third stool was produced, on which I sat, working at nothing at all. We sat all three, silent, bathed in that profound and timeless tranquillity which pervades the cool dark *patios* of Spain—sat, so it seemed to me, “without emotion, hope or aim,” like Wordsworth “in the loved presence of his cottage fire.” Presently I began to wish there were

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a fire. The chill of the bleak Aragonese winters hangs about these vast *patios* far into spring. An unfriendly and treacherous chill it is too, lurking ambushed in shadows and striking into your vitals when you are least expecting it. Just on the other side of the threshold, where the frontier between sun and shade was sharply defined, it was high summer. A dog of undistinguished pedigree lay on the sunny side, snapping unsuccessfully at the newly hatched but nimble flies of spring, and sturdy Aragonese children played at make-believe bull-fights in the dust. On our side of the frontier, however, December still held sway and warmth was contraband. I sneezed.

“Go into the kitchen, señor,” commanded the lady in black. “Pilar, go and light the fire.”

I was glad to obey, and passing through an open door at the back intruded upon a calf and several young pigs who were taking their midday siesta. Correcting my error, I entered another and smaller room with a large inglenook, indeed it would be correct to say that the room was all nook. Upon the hearth was heaped a pile of green fir branches which, when Pilar applied a light to them, shot a sudden violet flame up the yawning chimney to the square of shining blue at the top. The flame at once shrank into a few glowing embers, on which Pilar commenced to fry a potato omelette. I have no doubt it would have been a very excellent omelette if an itinerant pedlar,

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peddling paste earrings, had not chanced to wander in at that very critical moment. It is not so easy to fry a potato omelette and at the same time decide between the relative attractions of emerald and sapphire earrings, all at the surprisingly cheap rate of half-a-peseta apiece. By the time that Pilar had elected for the emeralds, the omelette was lost irretrievably. But my loss was the pedlar's gain, for, observing that I made but little headway with the charred remains, he offered to take them off my hands, to which I gladly consented.

And now other Pilars—for you are as safe in calling a girl in Aragon Pilar as a new-made knight in England Sir John—entered in flocks, as though the inglenook were none other than the interior of the mountain near Hamelin's town and the pedlar the Pied Piper himself. "The stuff of all countries is just the same," remarked the sententious Emerson. The feminine stuff is so, at any rate. One might have supposed there was not a large demand for jewellery in Fuendetodos. Even the Vice-Consul was unaware of it. But, bless you, the Rue de la Paix itself never saw such a brisk half-hour's trade in precious stones. Vanity? Well, it went a trifle deeper than that, I fancy. Spring was in the air, and the same impulse that was urging the young green wheat to greet the sun and the almond-trees to woo the winds with blossom stood the pedlar in good stead.

Whilst the bargaining was going forward, I had

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leisure to observe carefully the Pilars of Fuendetodos, so that I might recognise them if I saw any of them afterwards on the canvases of Goya. No languid beauties of the South, these children of windy Aragon—rose-cheeked, brown-haired, quick-eyed, with high, broad foreheads and full, determined little chins. But for their Aragonese chatter, I could have sworn that they had been nurtured on the heaths of Scotland. Scotch without a doubt was their loathness to part with the sixpences, for not a single sapphire or emerald changed hands at a half-a-peseta but a strenuous if unsuccessful effort was made to secure an allowance of five centimos discount.

But now it was high time for me to set out in quest of the house where Goya was born. Calle de Alfondiga, No. 15, was the direction given by the landlady of the *posada*, who proceeded to conduct me thither. News of my coming must have been signalled in advance, for I was abashed to find half the housewives of Fuendetodos assembled in the *patio* to receive me.

“This way, señor, here she is,” exclaimed a young woman, whom I took to be the mistress of the house, leading the way to a small bedroom on the ground floor, the rest of the company following. “She,” whoever she might be, was bedridden, but made an effort to lift her silvery head from the pillow as I entered. Now could there be a mistake? Did they take me for the doctor from La Puebla?

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That could scarcely be, for every woman who addressed me put her mouth close to my ear and shouted at the topmost pitch of her robust Aragonese lungs. By that it was clear that they were aware that I was a foreigner, for every Spaniard knows that the only way to make the foreigner understand is to shout at him at close quarters so that the words cannot fail to penetrate his skull, however obtuse.

"She's very old and feeble!" shrieked she who was mistress of the place.

"Six and eighty years!" a neighbour vociferously corroborated.

"She's not like to be much longer in this world," screamed a friend of the invalid.

"We don't think she'll last the summer out," roared another sympathiser.

I scarcely knew whether the correct attitude to adopt was one of condolence or of optimism. In any case it seemed desirable that we should discuss the impending decease of the aged sufferer in a lower key.

"But who is she?" I inquired at last.

"Why, Doña Benita Lucientes," chorused the crowd, "granddaughter of Goya's mother's sister."

"They say she has the face of Goya," explained the hostess of the *posada*. "Open the shutter, Pilar, and let the Señor see for himself."

But what the face of Goya was really like I

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confess I had not the hardihood to stay to see. Throughout this somewhat embarrassing interview I had been secretly glad of the shutter's kindly obscurity, and now, briefly pressing the old lady's shrunken fingers, I hastily took my leave. The bedroom in which the newly born Francisco first saw the light that was to be the joy of his four-score years, the kitchen where he doubtless loved to watch the violet flame shoot up the yawning chimney to the blue patch of sky, the backyard where he first teased those bulls of which he became, if report speaks true, a dexterous fighter—well, are they not like the bedrooms, kitchens and backyards of all the little Franciscos whose fame has never travelled out of earshot of the village where they were born ? ¹

And now to the church. But first we must call upon the Alcalde—for there is a certain etiquette to be observed even in Fuendetodos—or rather upon the Alcalde's wife, for his worship was afield ploughing. Again the cool shadowy *patio* and the three low stools—the landlady of the *posada*, the Alcalde's wife and I.

“Do you ever have a fiesta here ?” I asked—

¹ When I visited the house it was distinguished from the other houses of the village only by its age and poverty. A few weeks afterwards, however, a memorial tablet was placed on the wall. It was unveiled by the Spanish painter, Ignacio Zuloaga, and bore the following inscription :—*En esta humilde casa nació para honor de la patria y asombro del arte el insigne pintor Francisco Goya Lucientes, 31 de Marzo 1746—16 April 1828. La admiración de todos rindió este homenaje á su imperecidera memoria.*

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the words falling into this tense silence like stones into still water.

"Once a year, the 24th of August."

"And do you have music then?"

"Oh yes, music and a procession."

"Guitars, no doubt?"

"Guitar-r-r-as! No, Dios mio!" And the Alcalde's wife made a gesture, not altogether unlike that of a rude boy putting his fingers to his nose, expressive of her horror at the profanity of the idea. A very formal and rather *triste* little village, I reflected, and wondered whether it had been as formal and as *triste* in Goya's day. In order to divert the thoughts of the company from the unhappy subject of the guitars, I inquired if we were waiting for the Cura.

"For the *Señor Cura*," corrected the Alcalde's wife. Decidedly a most formal little village, which held authority in due respect.

"But may we not enter the church without waiting for the *Señor Cura*?" I questioned, observing how the shadows were lengthening in the *plaza* in front of us. But the question was apparently too senseless to be worth an answer and the silence in the *patio* again became like still, deep water.

Happily before the shadows grew many inches longer, the *Señor Cura* arrived, a rather wistful-looking young man, whose face, had it been shaved, would, I feel sure, have worn an air of no little

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distinction and refinement. But I can quite understand that the niceness of personal habits is apt to perish in villages such as Fuendetodos. He too must have been forewarned of the object of my visit, for without any words beyond the formal phrase of greeting he went to fetch the keys and led the way to the church. I know he took me for a heretic, for he never offered me so much as a drop on his finger-tips of the holy water with which he crossed himself as we entered.

The church was very dark, lit only by a few circular windows set high up in the wall, and even these were curtained. Over a side altar on the gospel side, the one nearest the *altar mayor*, stands a *retablo* which serves as a cupboard in which the modest treasures of the little church are stored. Its double doors are painted on both sides by the hand of Goya. The subject on the outer panel represents St James, as he prays on the banks of the Ebro, receiving from Our Lady the image and the jasper pillar which are now preserved in the Cathedral of La Virgen del Pilar at Zaragoza. The light, however, was so poor, and the painting so dimmed with dirt and candle smoke, that the picture presented no more than a blurred impression. Removing the candlesticks, the priest opened the doors, on the inner panels of which the paintings proved to be in a much better state of preservation. One represented the Assumption of the Virgin, the other a saint with a snowy beard,

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whose identity I have forgotten. I looked at these figures in vain for any trace of Goya's realistic vision. They were purely conventional in colour and design. Little wonder that when he visited Fuendetodos as an old man, in 1808, Goya exclaimed on seeing again his early work: "Don't tell me that I painted this!" Tradition has it that Goya painted these panels at the tender age of twelve, but I am convinced that this is merely another of those inaccuracies into which tradition, with its incurable hankering after the marvellous, is so easily misled. No child of twelve, were he never so precocious, ever attained such fluency of design and knowledge of the handling of paint. Moreover these figures were obviously painted by one who was familiar with the fashion in which saints are wont to arrange their draperies and the poses which they naturally adopt when they are standing for their portraits, and where should the infant Goya have become acquainted with these peculiarities? Not in Fuendetodos, I imagine. Much more likely at Zaragoza, in the studio of his master, Don José Luzán y Martínez, who had lived in Italy, and studied Tiepolo, and may therefore be conjectured to have had first-hand knowledge of the attitudes of saints. If I were to hazard a guess, I should say that these panels belonged to the period of his early student days in Zaragoza, painted perhaps in the leisure of a holiday spent in his native village, when the young artist was

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eager to display to the admiring villagers the clever tricks he had learnt down there in the city in the valley.

As I had made no audible comments during my examination of the paintings, the priest thought it only kind, no doubt, to give me a friendly lead.

“*Los inteligentes*,” he remarked—people with intelligence, that is to say—“esteem very highly the naturalness of the beard of the saint.”

But I think that I learnt more about Goya out there in the little *plaza* in front of the church than before those half-effaced traces of his early efforts. All the boys of Fuendetodos were waiting outside the church door, and when the Señor Cura appeared every one of them saluted—not a perfunctory touching of the forelock, but as profound a reverence as Dr Johnson thought fit for an archbishop. The Señor Cura was evidently both priest and potentate of the little hamlet. No squire here to usurp the reins of government, and as for the Alcalde, ploughing his holding out there in the fields, why, what was he but a peasant like the rest of them? But with that instinct which still survives from less democratic centuries they recognised that the priest belonged to another world than theirs—his face, shaven or unshaven, bore the ineffaceable stamp of authority. No wonder the village did not dare to speak of him even behind his back without the prefix of respect, and did not greet him without uncovering. I am

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sure that this wistful-eyed young man never misuses his authority, but qualifies it with affection and good sense. But what of the Señor Cura who ruled here in Goya's time ? I could not help wondering if he might not have been a tyrant *de facto* as well as *de jure*, and whether some petty but rankling act of injustice might not have kindled the first spark of Goya's angry anti-clericalism. In my mind's eye I saw the scowling Francisco standing there with his playmates in front of the church, as the urchins were standing now, his cap in his hand and black hatred in his heart. And guitars forbidden too at the annual *fiesta*, Dios mio ! "An ugly thing, this Catholic Church," he may well have thought, "with its bullying señor curas and its abomination of guitars ! " Is it altogether fanciful to suppose that from such tiny seeds may have sprung the bitter fruit of the satires of his later years ? "Surely we end rather than begin with the principles that shape our life and thought." We live first and formulate our principles afterwards. And I fancy that if we were to be quite honest with ourselves we should have to admit that those principles which we supposed to be the logical product of experience were really there, in the germ, in the motions which stirred in us in the first moments of waking consciousness. We grow, but we change less than we suppose. We follow throughout our lives the first bent of our nature. And how slight

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and imperceptible the touch that gives to the sapling character its determining bent.

I stayed a while leaning over the parapet that bounds the little *plaza*, looking out over the shallow, stony valley. The sun was dropping below the hill-tops and the warm brick-reds of the landscape chilled to the grey of a March twilight. A gap in the hills beckoned the eye to the distant purple plain beyond. What a remote, desolate, abandoned spot was this Fuendetodos to foster a genius in ! And what indomitable resolution must have been his to break the hard shell that confined him, to free himself from the oppression of the environment, to defy the tyranny of the Señor Cura and all other repressive authorities, to tramp with dogged steps over the stony wilderness to La Puebla and down the long valley to Zaragoza and out into the world beyond ! I began to doubt whether there has ever been a mute inglorious Milton or a Michael Angelo whose hands never relaxed their grip of the handle of the plough. Genius, like murder, will out—if it could get out of Fuendetodos there is surely no solitude or fastness in the world from which it cannot disimprison itself. But that is the essence of genius, independence of circumstances. It stands upon its own foundation and needs no external supports. Do we not sometimes think that, had circumstances been otherwise, we should have been this or that, something at any rate very different from what

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we are ? And we are right, so we should—because we are of the lesser sort who live dependent on circumstances. To the great ones of the earth circumstances are indifferent. It is all one to them whether they are born in Fuendetodos or in Rome.

But it grows late. As the post only makes the journey once a day, I hired an urchin to accompany me as far as the brow of the hill from which on a clear evening you can see the symmetrical station down in the plain, not trusting to my own sagacity to select the particular track, in all that labyrinth of tracks, which leads to La Puebla. Miguel, having with Aragonese shrewdness first secured payment in advance, strode along manfully, his blanket thrown over his shoulder in the manner of his elders. We gained the brow of the hill, descended the chalky ravine where the golden fir-trees cower, and emerged from their shadows. Before us stretched the plain, purple beneath a purple sky, but spotted here and there with shining, clear-cut circles of light, where the last fugitive rays slanted upon it. An erring gleam fell upon Miguel as he stood there in the pathway, sturdy, upright, frank, a picture of Aragon in little. He pointed silently to the station, and then, holding out his small brown hand, he looked me frankly in the eyes and smiling said :

“ *Hasta otra vez* ”—Until another time.

Adorable child ! How have your rude hills taught you so fine and simple a courtesy ? But no, Miguel,

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there will not be another time. I have said good-bye to Fuendetodos and its Señor Cura and its moribund Doña Benita Lucientes for good and all. Never again shall I pursue the hurrying post across this forlorn plain. For there is something in the desolation, the abandonment, the oppressive peace, of these lost hamlets of an older Spain for which my spirit, I confess it with shame and sorrow, is not sufficiently robust. Is it not a fact that much sojourning in the garish but friendly towns corrupts and enfeebles the spirit, unfitting it for an exile, however brief, in those solitudes where has been shaped a more ancient and inflexible way of life ?

I remember that once, in an idle hour, I scanned a map of Spain and spied in a white oasis in the maze of print the pleasant name of Madrigal de las Altas Torres (Madrigal of the High Towers). Do you not see it, the compact, brown-walled town, with its high towers piercing the blue ? But if you have registered a vow, as I did, to visit it some time before your journeying days are done, take my advice—do not go ! For when at last, weary and footsore, you stand beneath the shadow of its crumbling towers, you will find nothing but dust and silence and weariness of spirit. And the people of the place will gather round you and shout into your ears until the drums are like to crack. And they will bring the Señor Cura to you, but he will give you no holy water, for whether you are of

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the Faith or not, being English, you shall not escape the taint of heresy. Spain, I think, will always remain an undiscovered country, for the reason that there are few who have the intrepidity of spirit necessary to discover it.

I was glad when the train, with a welcoming whistle, slid into sight at La Puebla de Albortón, trailing its unoccupied coach and useless goods trucks. Nor did I envy the brakesmen in their little observatories, for I had seen that day enough of desolation and weakly craved for the limited but substantial comforts of the Lion d'Or.



IV

LA CARTUJA DE AULA DEI

I NEVER knew such a place as Zaragoza for disappointing you at first in order to please you afterwards. She is a very Kathleen ni Houlihan among cities, who greets you in the guise of an ugly old woman and then, throwing off her rags, becomes a young girl with the gait of a queen.

On second thoughts I don't believe that's a very apt simile—it is as a prosperous and rather vulgar matron that Zaragoza first presents herself to you, with paint plastered over her wrinkles and a would-be youthful smirk that ill becomes her years. For she has years, thousands of them. She was already out of her infancy when Cæsar Augustus discovered her and gave her his name, which, apart from the lisp, she has mangled somewhat in the course of ages. But she is growing short of memory. She has very little to tell you about the Roman emperors (though a few of their mosaics are still lurking in her cellars ¹) and not much more

¹ Notably in those of the house of Don Mariano de Ena y Valenzuela in the Calle del Coso, which he is most courteously ready to show to strangers. Don Mariano also possesses an intensely interesting and revealing portrait of Goya as a young man, painted by the artist himself, probably during his early sojourn in Zaragoza.

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about their successors, the Moorish caliphs and the Catholic Kings. The cathedrals still bear august witness to her past, and there is the Lonja, the sixteenth-century exchange, tremendously imposing in that sheer expanse of wall, a mode of antique Rome, of which our British architects—all except the one who built the spacious wall outside Victoria Station—have never learnt the trick. I had read too that there were fine Renaissance palaces with great overhanging eaves, but if they have not been pulled down, which I fancy is the case, I never succeeded in finding them. I found instead streets of flashy shops, in most of which they sold oxydised-silver reproductions of the Virgin of the Pillar, sewing machines and sanitary appliances. Of course, nowadays, one is compelled to applaud this zeal for sanitation; nevertheless I have a secret conviction, not unfounded on experience, that no really romantic town ever submits to be quite sanitary.

And yet in spite of her virtues I like Zaragoza. I can't for the life of me tell you why. Proof of the liking, I suppose, for once you can give a reason for your likes you are in a fair way to losing them—is it not? It rained nearly the whole time I was there—oh yes, it can rain in Spain!—but I never lost the sense of an unaccountable blitheness in the air. I suppose it must have been partly on account of the friendliness of the place.

At the British Vice-Consulate, I must tell you,

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a surprisingly large number of clerks is employed. The nature of their employment during fifty-one weeks in the year I cannot guess, but whatever it is they abandoned it during the one week of my sojourn in Zaragoza in order to sit with me all day in the cafés, which exceed even the hotels for multitude. Now each of these clerks has a friend, or friends, who also will obligingly put aside the calls of business to keep you company in the café. And these friends have other friends, who never tire of smoking your cigars and drinking your proffered cups of coffee, just to show the extreme sincerity of their friendliness. And the street, too, swarms with friends, and the tramcars and the churches. I had never thought it possible to possess so many friends. All Zaragoza became my friend—one great, smiling, warm-hearted, myriad-mouthed, expensive friend. And from time to time I would retire to the solitude of the Lion d'Or and wonder whether of that of all my friends I did not chiefly prefer the dim and spectral friendship of Juan.

It was with one of these friends, who bore the fascinating name of Don Larripa Gil (must not the life of the owner of such a name be a daily adventure?), that I drove out one day in a victoria and pair (of mules) to visit the neighbouring monastery of Nuestra Señora de Aula Dei, better known as the Cartuja Alta. A friend sat on the box, and Don Larripa invited another

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friend to come inside. As the inside consisted of a narrow shelf that was completely filled by Don Larripa and myself, I was no less gratified than surprised when this friend remembered some neglected business which positively demanded his immediate attention.

I had privately formed an opinion that the paving contractor who had undertaken to pave Zaragoza was, like many optimists, incompetent, and that it would have been wiser not to have attempted to improve upon the streets as Cæsar Augustus had left them. But that was before I drove to Aula Dei. The road to Aula Dei consists of several more or less parallel series of ruts, interspersed with pits lying at a considerably deeper level than the surrounding landscape. Even the mules, which were presumably accustomed to excursions of this kind, seemed at times perplexed to know how to extricate themselves from these lower strata. A noteworthy procedure was followed on the occasion of these temporary halts. The driver descended from the box on one side and the friend on the other. Each expostulated with a mule, until at last the dismayed beasts with a supreme effort scrambled up the sheer side of the pit and set off in a panic gallop towards the monastery, the reins meanwhile lying loose on the box. Don Larripa and myself then became the interested spectators of a race between the mules and the driver and friend.

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It was a moment charged with some anxiety, but happily the driver and friend proved the superiority of their wind and stamina, and finally, with a dexterity that a trained acrobat might have envied, leapt into the crazy vehicle and resumed a temporary control of its destinies.

Advancing thus by leaps and bounds through the smiling valley landscape, we came at last within sight of the low range of buildings, crouching round a slender tower, which form the monastery of Aula Dei. Founded in the middle of the sixteenth century, the monastery fell into decay in the evil days of the French invasion at the beginning of the last century, when the invaders converted it into a barracks. Then just when things had settled down a little, in 1830, Spain was seized with one of those anti-clerical fits, epidemic in all Latin countries, and sent her patient monks packing. The order of the day being *laborare* rather than *orare*, the sacred edifice saw itself transformed into a factory and wore perforce the secular habit until, in 1901, a ragged ruin, it was acquired by the Carthusian Order as a refuge for the expatriated monks of France, now in its turn fever-stricken with anti-clericalism. And so to-day the monastery is, structurally, neither ancient nor interesting. Why, then, undertake the hazardous drive to visit it? I had forgotten to tell you. Goya, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, decorated the walls of the church with

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a series of paintings.¹ During the unfortunate factory period the roof partially collapsed and the paintings were seriously damaged by the damp, those on the north wall being irreparably ruined. After their reinstallation the Chartreux fathers summoned two smart young painters from Paris, the Buffet brothers, who replaced the lost works with smooth, highly coloured, improbable renderings of religious subjects, of the same family as the oleographs which the Religious Tract Society turns out wholesale for the embellishment of Sunday schools and church parlours. Encouraged by the polished and cheerful aspect of their original work, the incorrigible Frenchmen also devoted some attention to the unperished designs of Goya, on the opposite wall, to which they endeavoured to impart a little of their own brightness and *chic*.

The prior received us in the courtyard, a pleasant-looking figure in his clean white habit, French every inch of him, with the most courteous manners and humorous beady eyes imaginable. We conversed for a short while about Goya, a little in French, a little in Spanish, a little in English, in none of which did I succeed in making myself very intelligible to his Reverence's understanding—it is somewhat confusing, I find, to attempt to give each of the idioms of the three

¹ They cannot, properly speaking, be called frescoes. They were painted in oil, directly upon the walls, without any other preparation than a *mano*, or layer of red compound. This rash process has doubtless been responsible in part for their swift decay.

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languages a turn within the space of as many minutes. The prior then turned to a burly brother with a rough brown beard, who was engaged in some plumbing business in a corner of the yard, and I was slightly taken aback to hear myself introduced as "Un monsieur, passioné de la peinture, qui vous parlerez en anglais, français, espagnol, tout ce que vous voulez!" I was left to infer as best I could from his bland countenance with its beady twinkling eyes whether the prior spoke more in flattery than in satire.

I don't know whether it is the rule among Carthusians, but at the monastery of Aula Dei it is certainly the fashion to shave the upper lip and cheeks, and allow the hair to grow upon the chin. The habit gives the pious fathers a disconcerting facial resemblance to the typical British workman as he was portrayed in the pages of *Punch* a generation or more ago. It was for that reason, perhaps, that I could scarcely believe my ears when the plumbing brother began to discourse of Goya in the most polished French, and with the exact knowledge of an art specialist.

"No, it is impossible to tell with absolute certainty the year when the paintings were executed. Records? Well, you see, all the records were destroyed when the monastery was suppressed in 1830. It is probable however, certain we may say, that they were done during the period when Father Felix Salzedo was prior. It was he, you will

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remember, who is supposed to have discovered Goya, when a small boy, drawing pigs on a white-washed wall in Fuendetodos, and to have started him on his career as a painter. Certainly he remained Goya's friend, as we know from his kindly intervention when the irascible genius was at loggerheads with the Cathedral Chapter about the designs for the frescoes there. Moreover, as it is reasonable to suppose that Goya decorated our church during one of his visits to Zaragoza when he was at work upon the cathedral, we are left with two dates to choose from—1772, immediately before he went to Italy,¹ and 1780-1781, five years after his return. Now our paintings show no sign of the tentativeness of youth. They have manifestly the stamp of maturity. They were executed when Goya possessed the full mastery of his talent. Therefore I have little hesitation in saying that they belong to the second period, after his Italian visit."

Thus the plumber. I have since referred to *Forma*,² which gives a detailed account of Goya's work at Aula Dei and bears out the plumber's opinion. But perhaps he also had referred to it in the intervals of his plumbing!

The bell now began to ring for vespers, and the monks prepared for one of those swift transitions

¹ There is some doubt as to the actual date of Goya's visit to Rome. According to the Conde de la Viñaza, the most reliable authority, he arrived there in 1772 and returned to Madrid in 1775.

² A monthly review of the arts, published in Barcelona, now, I believe, defunct. The number referred to is No. 23.

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from work to prayer which mark for them the tranquil passage of the day. Would I look round the monastery while vespers were being sung and visit the church afterwards? No, if it were permissible, I would rather keep the good fathers company at their devotions. After all, the arts are not very remote in kin from religion, and I am not sure whether looking at good painting is not in its way a kind of prayer.

The monks filed into the church and took their several places at the stalls ranged round the choir. The wooden gates of the choir screen were closed, and I was left alone in the body of the church, Goya all in front of me and the Buffet brothers at my back.

It is said that Goya was no painter of religious subjects, being no great lover of religion. Of this question perhaps the monk may be allowed to be a more competent judge than the mere critic. And it seemed to me that the monks of Aula Dei worshipped none the worse for the presence on their walls of these large, simple and gracious designs. Nothing hieratic or mystical, of course—we are in the eighteenth century, remember—and therefore, thank heaven! nothing sentimental. (If it's sentiment you want, just turn your head over your shoulder—the Messieurs Buffet are wholesale dealers in the commodity.) No, these grave personages, taking their part in these scenes which form the prologue to that deathless Drama

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which we call the Faith—the Birth and Marriage of the Virgin-Mother, the Visitation, the Adoration of the Kings, the Presentation in the Temple, the Purification—move across the stage with a large, mundane, serene humanity. I begin to doubt whether the Ages of Faith were the best commentators of that Drama after all. They were so dominated by its tremendous spiritual significance that they disdained to linger over its merely human charm. They read the story for the allegory, and seemed to be almost impatient of the text itself in their eagerness to hurry on to the mystical glosses with which the theologians swelled the appendix. They etherealised the dramatis personæ, haloed and canopied them overmuch. They were indifferent to the scenery of earth, deeming it too mean a setting for so divine a theme. They wrapped up the action in an awful flame. We may be conscious of some loss of exaltation in passing from Cimabue and Fra Angelico to Carpaccio and Veronese, but at any rate the Renaissance set the Drama firmly on the earth again, gave it the staging of the world we know, restored to the players their mortality.

Our modern religious painters have gone further still. They are blessed with that sixth sense, the historical, which the older men had to make what shift they could without. They know that the Drama took place in Palestine, a province of Asia Minor, inhabited by a people of Semitic race.

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They know exactly what the scenery of Palestine is like, for they have photographs of it in their portfolios. They know that Mary was a Hebrew maiden, Joseph a Hebrew carpenter, and such sticklers for the letter as Holman Hunt and the brothers Buffet can give you accurate facsimiles of the costumes of Hebrew maidens and carpenters, for have they not been to Palestine to see ? What could you want more topical, more realistic ? And since you naturally want a little sentiment too, why a touch or so of flake-white about the head will satisfy all pious requirements—but just a vague glimmer, mind you, nothing so improbable as a well-matured nimbus.

Goya was no visionary, neither was he a Pre-Raphaelite pedant. (It is extremely unlikely that he ever saw a camel, but that did not prevent him from putting two of them in his “Adoration of the Kings”—and two very intelligent camels they are too, far more expressive than any that ever came out of Palestine.) He was pure eighteenth-century in 1780 at any rate—later, as we shall see, he received the fiery baptism of a newer age. There was not much mystery for him about the foundations of the Faith. Had he known English, I feel sure he would have read Toland’s “Christianity Not Mysterious” with warm approval. His vision therefore was unmodified by any strictly ecclesiastical bias, he was free to treat his subject in a purely naturalistic manner. And the truth he

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aimed at was not the literalism of the historical scene, but the perpetual truth of human emotions in the grave crises of human life. At the same time he was aware that convention demanded a certain aspect of decorousness, of pomp, or at all events Father Felix Salzedo demanded it, and it would never do to displease kind Father Felix. Hence his figures are not untouched by a kind of heroic grandeur, a kinship with the august persons of classical mythology, and fall at times into almost academic poses. I don't wish to imply that this sort of thing went altogether against the grain with Goya—it was the eighteenth-century tradition into which he was born, a tradition against which he did not immediately revolt.

Not all the Father Felixes in the world, however, could prevent Goya from being himself. The natural touch, the Aragonese touch even, predominates. Among the delightful group of women who gather solicitously round the smiling newborn Maria, one kneels and rests her arm upon a pitcher with the self-same gesture that you may see any day in any village in Spain. Only it is not a Spanish pitcher that she rests it on—convention is placated with a Grecian urn. In "The Madonna of the Circumcision" I recognised—I knew I should come across her sooner or later—Pilar of the *posada*, no swart-featured Semitic maiden, but a ruddy daughter of Aragon. Conscious of her good looks, she displays the full, supple curves of her

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figure in a somewhat bold and negligent pose, making a bid for the admiration of the spectator, just as I am sure Pilar herself would have done in the like circumstances. Indeed I was almost surprised to find no ruby earrings pendent from her ears. In "The Adoration of the Kings" Goya has treated the Ethiopian monarch with peculiar freedom. He stands, arms extended, gigantically silhouetted against the sky in a gesture of immense surprise. Indeed one who speaks with authority on the subject has said that he precisely resembles the nigger who used to dance the Tango de la Habana in the Café de Marina at Madrid. In many of the paintings is to be noticed a feature, unobtrusive but perhaps the most essentially Goyaesque of all—somewhere in the background, beneath archways, in the shadow of walls, outlined against dull skies, are seen little miscellaneous groups of figures, chiefly in half-length, vague, grey, anonymous. Something more than a mere decorative device, I think, a way of filling up empty corners. A record doubtless of a fact of real life, for every notable incident in a public place has its fringe of casual lookers-on. But I seem to see in it more even than a record of fact—a hint rather of that preoccupation with the crowd—shall we say of the democracy?—which acquires as the years go by a greater volume and significance until it becomes almost the dominant note of Goya's work.

Had these paintings in the Cartuja not been

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practically unknown until the last decade, I doubt whether the legend of Goya's failure as a religious painter would have had such a facile growth. The adverse verdict has been generally pronounced upon the exclusive evidence of his more mundane decorations for the Church of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid, which we shall study later. It is a far cry from the gay Paseo de la Florida, gay in his time at any rate, to this lone monastery in the Ebro Valley. I cannot but think that the quiet smiling landscape and the mild, placid lives of the holy fathers among whom he lived had some influence upon the mood in which he did his work here. The impression which they leave on the mind is one of simplicity, serenity and grave tenderness, the very qualities surely which the religious painter should reveal. And these qualities cling to the paintings not merely as an indefinable aroma : they enter into the actual composition of the designs. They are almost the only works on a large scale that I can remember which retain the innocence and freshness of the original sketch. They are informed with a breadth and largeness of a striking nobility. Compare his " Adoration of the Kings " with the usual treatment of the subject—in particular with the riotous conception of Rubens in the Prado at Madrid. There, royalty is clothed in the royalest purple and scarlet, accompanied by a glittering, tumultuous retinue, surrounded by every circumstance of pomp. The

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central theme is well-nigh lost amidst the multiplicity of incident—pages of a hectic beauty bearing caskets, negro boys blowing on censers with cheeks distended to the bursting point, naked men straining under unnecessary burdens simply that they may display their herculean proportion and cracking muscles for the spectator's admiration, trampling of horses and shouting as in a midnight riot, the blackness of the night rent by the fierce flare of torches. Here, in an ample open space, against the clarity of a sweeping sky of blue and snowlike cloud, the three kingly figures detach themselves with an unencumbered dignity and awe. Goya has refused to avail himself of any of the diamonded and brocaded accessories of the vulgar conception of kingship ; he gains a higher effect of grandeur by the broad masses of falling robes and large patriarchal gestures. This absence of rhetoric and display from a subject so peculiarly inviting to them is the more remarkable in a Spanish painter, for they are qualities very dear to the Spaniard, which he has introduced largely into his art, to its no small confusion. In "The Marriage of the Virgin" there is the same omission of ceremonial—it is little more than a clasping of hands, a gesture of union, between man and woman. And in the same scene is to be noted another feature recurring in Goya's religious compositions—the indifference of the subordinate persons to the main action. The figures in the

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background chatter among themselves, the children play self-absorbed upon the steps, the solemn, memorable event passes almost unheeded. Life is like that.

All this time the monks had been quietly chanting their office, and by-and-by I found myself turning from the pictured life on the walls to watch the real life around me. A young brother came in at the main entrance, carrying a censer, a poor brass affair, glowing with charcoal, which he handed to the prior. The chanting ceased, and through the railings of the choir screen I could see the prior gravely censuring one by one the robust and sun-tanned fathers, each of whom responded to this salutation with an inclination of the head. An idle way for twoscore full-grown men to pass an April afternoon, did you say ? So, too, I dare conjecture Goya thought, as he paused in his work and, looking down from his scaffolding, watched with a scornful wonder the immemorial and unprofitable ceremonies of the Church. Who shall judge ? For my part, when the memory of the paintings has faded from my mind, I think I shall still retain this picture of a little band of brothers, who spend their days in pursuit neither of profit nor pleasure, but draw aside from their labour to listen yet again to the rehearsal of that deathless Drama, for which the rest of us find our April afternoons too short.

But the bitterest anti-clerical of all must at

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any rate admit that they know a thing or two about liqueurs, these fathers of Chartreux. And if he could have come with Don Larripa and myself into the mournful little parlour where Brother James, the burly plumber, brimmed up two little glasses with a pale amber liquid, whose fragrance was like that of an orchard in May, he might have conceded that monks have their use, even in a world that has grown dubious of the certainty of all things save those which it can touch and see and taste. Your anti-clerical, if he has the seeds of wisdom in him, will perceive that this is a point or two better than the forged stuff they export under a borrowed label from anti-clerical France. Be careful of the label, my friends, when you order your Chartreuse. See that it bears the authentic seal of the Prior of Tarragona. And remember when you drink it—although perhaps the fact won't interest you so greatly if you have not been to the Cartuja de Aula Dei—that the herbs are grown here in the cloister garden, tended by the kindly fathers, who, as they daily chant their antiphonal psalms in the choir, regard with mild uncritical eyes, one half the works of Francisco Goya y Lucientes, the other the masterpieces of Paul and Amadée Buffet.

(Do they dispute which side to sit on ? And are the stalls facing the Buffet frescoes overcrowded ? I wonder.)

V

LA VIRGEN DEL PILAR

MOST cities count themselves fortunate if they can boast of one cathedral. Zaragoza possesses two.

Now if you have two cathedrals, the result is just the same as if you should have two wives—jealousy, rivalry, bickering. Which was the legitimate cathedral?—or, in other words, which possessed the metropolitan dignity? Both claimed it, and so, in order to put an end to a dispute that was becoming wearisome, some seventeenth-century Solomon hit upon the happy plan of conferring it on both. But the dispute isn't really ended even yet. It is latent, but you can't escape the influence of it. It is impossible not to take sides. You must become a partisan either of La Seo or of El Pilar. Personally, I am enlisted in the Pilar faction.

This preference, I know, may seem to indicate a debased taste. For La Seo is Gothic, with the mystery and devotion of Gothic, while El Pilar, as it now stands, is late seventeenth and eighteenth century, chiefly mid-eighteenth—not a period very enthusiastic or very successful in the building

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of great churches. But the architect, Francisco de Herrera, upon whose designs the church was built, or rather is still being built, for the original plan has not yet been completely carried out, lived near enough to that splendid age, the *siglo del oro*, when Spain possessed the daring and imagination which made her for a brief hour the mistress of the world, to receive its influence and impress it on his work. I should like to know more of this Francisco de Herrera. Did he ever visit Russia, I wonder? How else could he have conceived of this typically Byzantine conjunction of domes and minarets, which gives El Pilar a more vivid sky-line than that of any building I have ever seen? You should see it at sunset, from the other side of the stone bridge that spans the Ebro. And be sure you choose a dramatic sunset—it's not difficult in Aragon—with ragged purple clouds against a sky the colour of the blood of bulls. There is something correspondingly dramatic in the bizarrerie of the cathedral's silhouette, something that communicates I know not what sense of tumult, imminent disaster and the wrath of Fate. And if, instead of two towers, the four which the architect planned had been completed, the effect would no doubt have been more tremendous still. Certainly the architect was helped, perhaps inspired, by the site of the building, for El Pilar stands, as every cathedral mindful of its appearance should stand, by the side of running water.

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It may be just as well for their own safety that most cathedrals do not. Nothing like the proximity of water for undermining the foundations. Perhaps El Pilar does not prophesy disaster in vain. Already one of her cupolas is rent with gaping cracks, and Fate has shown her malice by choosing just precisely the one that is adorned with Goya's frescoes.

The unkindness of this stroke would be more keenly felt if the cupola was not at such a height above the floor as to render the frescoes almost invisible. I fancy that the conscientious sightseer, both in Spain and Italy, must have often privately cursed those ecclesiastics whose enthusiasm for the fine arts was not contented with the wall space of their churches, but must needs annex the ceilings also. Had they prophetic vision of the army of northerners who should one day trample through their churches, and did they thus ingeniously conspire to give a crick to stubborn Protestant necks? Emphatically a ceiling is not a fit and proper place for the exposition of works of art. It is both undignified and dangerous to perambulate a cathedral with your nose pointing skywards. And twist and turn as you will, the figures on the ceiling always persist in remaining upside down.

But the disappointment natural at finding these frescoes on the cracked cupola so difficult to see is lessened by the fact that it is possible to examine the designs which Goya executed to

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assure the critical Chapter of his ability to undertake the work. It is possible—it is not easy. El Pilar is not a show place but a place of worship—I liked it all the better for that—and affords few facilities for sightseers. I went therefore one morning to seek the permission of the Chapter to look at these designs. It was the first time that I had been behind the scenes, as it were, of a great cathedral. I wandered through spacious sacristies, heavy with the odour of incense and burning charcoal, lavishly adorned with the most gorgeous and elaborate carving. It would seem as if all the carvers of the seventeenth century had had nothing else to do but to carve cherubs and cornucopias for the luxurious canons of El Pilar. What a passion they must have had for cherubs and cornucopias, those old fellows! Cherubs on the chairs, on the doors, on the cupboards, on the reading desks—the whole place was aflutter with coveys of cherubs. And all the silversmiths too must have been busy hammering the bars of silver which the heavily freighted galleons brought from the Americas, into flagons and chalices and patens. And there in the midst of so much splendour, and quite oblivious of it all, sat a decrepit canon, spelling out his breviary and toasting his toes at a smouldering *brasero*, for all the world like an old crone warming her bones at her kitchen fire. I suppose that when one has lived in such an atmosphere of splendour for threescore or fourscore

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years one comes to accept it without any special consciousness of it, just as the beggar accepts his rags. I wandered too into vestries, found myself in the midst of canons vesting and unvesting themselves, and then, abashed at the intimacy of so much dainty lace and so many pink and purple vestments, wandered incontinently out again.

At length, at the extremity of a long corridor, I came upon a priest in a greenish, threadbare cassock, warming himself at a *brasero*, from whom I derived the information that the Chapter was assembled in solemn conclave behind the door at the end of the corridor. He thought it inadvisable that I should intrude upon the conclave and more fitting that I should wait outside, as he himself was doing. I could not help feeling sorry for him—he wore so plainly the stamp of adverse fortune—and I wondered whether he had been shut out of the council, and why they wouldn't let him in. And then I thought that perhaps in the absence of any pressing business—for I am sure business never presses in Zaragoza—they were amusing themselves with one of those homely guessing games we used to play as children, and that the priest had been sent out of the room until the Chapter should have thought of a word. At any rate, as they seemed to have forgotten to call him in again, I offered him a cigarette, which he smoked with an air more of resignation than of satisfaction.

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We must have smoked many cigarettes—we were behind the scenes, you will remember—before the conclave ended. As the dignitaries filed out, I made my request to a canon to whom my priest directed me, and received the reply that they would have pleasure in showing me the designs on the following day.—What is a day more or less when there are such a lot of them in the year ?

The next day I presented myself again, and was taken up some flights of stairs to a kind of lumber-room, which serves as the museum of the cathedral. There, surrounded by numerous sketches of his brother-in-law, Bayeu, and others, hung the two fan-shaped designs of Goya. The subject represented is Maria Sanctissima as the Queen of Martyrs. They are executed with the freedom and vigour of sketches, which, as is usually the case, the painter seemed to have failed to reproduce in his finished work—so far, that is to say, as I was able to form any opinion of the latter. The colour is amazingly fresh and limpid. The general effect is finely flowing and decorative. Intense feeling there is none, but who wants intense feeling ninety feet above his head ? Decoration is what is required, and if proof were wanted that Goya was a born decorator, as well as a born realist, there is nothing more to be done than to consult these designs. Consult them too when you have first taken a glance at the competing compositions of Bayeu—

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after such a restless confusion of niggling, academic figures how large, restful and rhythmic is Goya's work.

The preliminary sketch for the fresco in the quadrangular vault above the *coreto* or little choir of the Chapel of the Virgen del Pilar, I could not find, and cannot say if it still exists. Goya executed this work in 1772, just before leaving for Italy. Probably the fifteen thousand reals which he received in payment for his work enabled him to defray the expenses of his journey thither. Tradition has it that he fought his way from Madrid to the coast as a bull-fighter. But of two alternatives tradition always chooses the more dramatic and less probable. The fresco is effective by reason simply of its colour, a splendid blaze of gold, in the midst of which flames the luminous triangle, emblem of the Holy Trinity. The other frescoes, the Maria Sanctissima, with the four figures of Faith, Fortitude, Charity and Patience filling the spandrels of the arches, were not executed until 1780. I do not propose to weary you with recounting the endless disputes between Goya and his brother-in-law Bayeu, supported by the Chapter, which accompanied the progress of this work. It is enough to say that Goya had the short temper of his Aragonese countrymen, Bayeu the irritating condescension of the successful Academician and the Chapter the tactlessness proper to chapters all the world over in matters in which art and artists

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are concerned. Here we have all the material for a pretty quarrel. The Chapter passed a resolution instructing the canon who had charge of the decorations to impress upon Goya how grateful he ought to be to his brother-in-law for his good offices in engaging him as his assistant. Goya refused to be grateful to his brother-in-law, was instead very much put out at his interference. Then the Chapter found some faults with Faith, Fortitude, Charity and Patience, particularly with the lady who represented Charity, whom they said lacked the decorum which one has the right to expect from a Christian virtue. The matter ended with the Chapter resolving that on no consideration should Goya be permitted to undertake any more decorations in the church, but that this need not deter the Señor Administrador from presenting his wife with a few medals, in virtue of her being the sister of Don Francisco Bayeu. Clearly the Chapter had a pretty knack in the art of pin-pricking! So Goya received his fee and his wife her medals, and off they went in the diligence to Madrid. (I wonder if the Despacho Central was running in those days!) But let us be going downstairs.

I have said that El Pilar is above all else a place of worship. I should suppose there is no other place in the world where there is so much worship. Enter it at whatsoever hour you like, you will find Zaragoza worshipping there. For Zaragoza

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is the Holy City of Aragon, and its holiness has a definite, concrete centre in the image and the jasper pillar which Santiago received from angelic hands, with a command to build a church there and a promise that it should endure to the end of the world. (Did Francisco de Herrera presume too much on the celestial promise and neglect to put his faith, as a more sceptical architect would have done, in terrestrial foundations? The world will not have to endure too long if his church is to be present at the final catastrophe.) The wooden image of the Virgin still stands on its jasper pillar, as it has stood if not since the first century at any rate since the twelfth, but it is difficult to see either the one or the other. The smoke-blackened Madonna, dressed in a white dalmatica, stands within a small but sumptuous bronze and marble temple, behind a dazzling array of candles and silver lamps. The jasper pillar would remain entirely conjectural but for a hole in the wall at the back of the shrine, which discloses a few square inches of the surface of the shaft, scooped into a smooth hollow by two or three centuries of pious kisses. Beneath the marble canopy, any time between daybreak and moonrise, you will find kneeling figures dreamwapt in adoration of their beloved Virgen del Pilar.

After you have stood a good while on the stone bridge and looked your fill at the cathedral's haggard profile flung against the darkening sky,

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then is the time to enter its portals and measure the effect of its interior. You will not enter it alone. Across the little tree-shadowed *plaza* throngs of people are flocking to the church. They too seem to know that the great hour of El Pilar has arrived. If the portals of the cathedral had been closed before dusk, I am not sure that I should ever have enlisted in the Pilar faction. Like a Spanish beauty past her prime, El Pilar cannot with impunity face the rigorous scrutiny of noon. The searching light exposes not only the wrinkling cracks in her cupola but also the general hardness of her aspect, an aspect of lifeless classical regularity unredeemed by any hint of emotion or significance. She has nothing to say to you, she will not answer your interrogations, she leaves you cold. But, again in the manner of a Spanish beauty, when the gloom begins to thicken, El Pilar begins to live. She contrives to borrow a little of that air of mystery which is the natural gift of her Gothic sisters, and she adds to it a majesty of mien that is all her own.

The citizens who are now flocking into the church do not all remain kneeling before the sumptuous marble shrine of the Virgin. In leisurely fashion they promenade up and down the spacious aisles, the magnitude of the church dwarfing them to the ridiculous proportions of those pigmy ladies and gentlemen one sometimes sees in the old-fashioned engravings of the interiors of

LA VIRGEN DEL PILAR

buildings, the gentleman always grandiloquently indicating nothing in particular with his walking-stick, the lady hanging on his arm with a gesture of loving attention. One of the minor losses, among the graver ones which the Reformation entailed upon us, is the loss of this habit of promenading in our churches. The practice it is true lingered in old St Paul's until the Gothic fabric perished in the Great Fire, but it seems to have given no little scandal to the Puritan mind. We sometimes visit our cathedrals on weekdays even now, and when we have paid our sixpence, and inscribed our signature in an album, tiptoe round the choir in company with other like curious but awed visitors, pausing from time to time in our silent perambulation to listen while the erudite verger recalls to our memory forgotten dates of Plantagenet kings and confusing periods of Gothic architecture.

In Zaragoza there is neither fee nor verger nor autograph album, and for the citizens there is no more novelty in the aspect of El Pilar than in that of their own homes. But then El Pilar *is* their own home—there's just the point—another vaster, grander, more spectacular home, but no less their own. They walk in it with an air of contented possession, unvexed by dates and architectural styles, taking its tranquillity, its pomp, its exhilarating amplitude into their spirits, as simply as one might take the sun and air. I could not help

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considering how profound, if insensible, an influence this daily promenading in their temple must have upon the citizens, elevating and tranquillising their minds after the petty vexations from which I suppose even the commerce of Zaragoza is not wholly free. And I wondered, too, whether Catholic Zaragoza is not after all informed by a finer spirit of democracy than that which agitates republican Barcelona, or for the matter of that any other so-called progressive metropolis. In Barcelona, as in London, the ardent and impoverished democrat can enjoy the blessings of democratic oratory and the cheap thrills of the democratic cinema, but the only place he can call his own is the mean tenement in the back street. In Zaragoza, however, the democracy promenades every evening in its sumptuous home, is familiar with the sense of a palatial environment, regards, at any rate at Easter time, with a somewhat negligent eye an array of tapestries, any one of which an American railroad magnate would sell his railroad to possess. Considering this I no longer wondered at the contentedness of the citizens, who seem to have no special reason for content, at their assured but unostentatious air of dignity, at their friendliness, which assumes but does not, American fashion, insistently assert, equality with the stranger, however many railroads he may happen to direct.

Now the clock strikes seven and the promenade

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becomes more formal. It is headed by three boys, blue-smocked and bare-legged, carrying gay silk banners, hung with streamers like a maypole, the ends of which are held by grave-eyed little girls. On either side of every banner other and smaller urchins hold up ponderous gilt lanterns, which look as though they had once been the lamps of an antiquated state coach. Behind them walk a number of men, in double file—all sorts and conditions of men, tradesmen, soldiers, clerks, peasants, the democratic medley of the street. And behind them a still greater number of women. No priest, no incense—nothing that is not purely popular and secular. They halt in front of the marble shrine, and kneeling recite the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and chant some verses of a hymn. Do not, I beg you, grow weary of the repetitions of the Litany and go away. Stay for the singing. It is Aragonese singing, harsh, shrill, urgent, with an undertone of sadness and a compelling fervour of appeal, plaintive yet triumphant. You will never hear such singing save in places where the Faith is firm, immemorial and undismayed. Then silence falls, and the banners and lanterns are carried away down the long, dark aisles. I think there is a magic in those lanterns. The naked candle is the light proper to the Catholic Church, but it was a right instinct which led El Pilar to prefer lanterns for her ceremonies. They accord well with her palatial rather than

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ecclesiastical splendour, her eighteenth - century and somewhat secular pomp.

El Pilar's great hour is now over. The citizens pass on to the next item in the day's programme, the café, and since, as an Aragonese author has said, it is the alternation of contraries that beautifies and sustains the world, they prefer, after the gloom and plaintive music of the church, that the café shall be bright with the raw glare of electric illumination and noisy with the still rawer merriment of automatic, electric pianos.

VI

OUTSIDE THE PRADO

WHY does anyone ever go to Madrid ? *Dios lo sabe !*

Of course there is the Prado. And what then ? Well, you can buy lottery tickets. And what then ? Really, I scarcely know.

On the night of my arrival all Madrid was in the streets buying lottery tickets. And the streets were being washed. These two incidents were not peculiar to the night of my arrival. They are the first incidents you will remark on the night of your arrival also. In a world where most things are in course of change they remain two unchanging phenomena. On the eve of the Last Day I fancy that Madrid will be in the streets buying lottery tickets and the streets will be receiving a final cleansing before the ultimate catastrophe renders the process for ever more unnecessary.

It was raining hard. It had been raining incessantly for the last week. The streets were as wet as the ever-weeping skies could make them, but not yet wet enough for a municipal council that has a greater passion for wetness and cleanliness than any other municipal council in the world.

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In every corner of the Puerta del Sol—Madrid's crooked, crowded heart—drenched figures armed with hosepipes were playing their waterspouts with indiscriminating enthusiasm upon the square in general, and upon tramcars, lamp-posts, automobiles, cabs, newsboys and the buyers and sellers of lottery tickets in particular. Surely the municipal street-washers might have been allowed a holiday on this night of all nights in the year!

The traffic in lottery tickets, however, was damped neither by the vertical downpour from the clouds nor by the sidewash from the hosepipes. The grand prize was one hundred and fifty thousand pesetas, a sum which does not altogether lose its attractiveness even when reduced to pounds sterling and divided by ten—for each individual ticket entitles you but to a tithe of the fortune. The drawing was to take place the next day, a fact which the vendors of the tickets emphasised by frantic cries of "*Para manana, para manana!*"—For to-morrow, to-morrow! The clock on the Ministerio de la Gobernación struck the hour of midnight and, redoubling the violence of their vociferation, the ticket-sellers altered their cry to correspond with the alteration of the calendar: "*Para hoy, para hoy!*"—To-day, to-day! The imminence of the decree of Fate gave a sudden stimulus to the traffickers in the caprice of the god. Tickets were exchanged for pesetas and pesetas for tickets with increased rapidity. The Puerta del Sol

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was transformed into one vast and feverish lottery exchange. It was impossible to escape the contagion—moral convictions of the reprehensibleness of gambling were powerless to confer immunity. The god was upon us. In face of the most intimidating odds we hesitated not to throw ourselves into his frenzied midnight saturnalia. We were devotees of the omnipotent peseta. We were thrilled, one and all, with the consciousness of the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Why, had Dr Johnson been among us, he would have despised Thrall's brewery and its beggarly dividends as a mere bagatelle ! We had done with the tedious processes of accumulation and industry—we were to be enriched in the twinkling of an eye, by the drawing of a lot.

The clock on the tower struck one, and two, and three. The loud shouts sank to a huskily whispered "*Para hoy*," scarcely audible above the swish of the rain and the hosepipes. The delirium subsided into the vaguely happy quiescence that follows the throes of intoxication. The fever had spent itself. The crowd in the *plaza* dissipated. Slowly we took our way homeward, soaked but not dispirited, for were we not all of us potential possessors of a hundred and fifty thousand pesetas ? Only a few more hours of penury and then, why then, no other occupation than to devise ways of spending them. A hundred and fifty thousand ! Were there really

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so many pesetas in the world ? And all for us ! And no waiting ! “ *Para hoy ! Para hoy !* ”

When next I meet a rigid moralist who condemns the lottery, I shall ask him how otherwise he proposes to touch a whole city on a black midnight of dismal rain with the golden rod of dreams and give it a three hours' surcease from the preoccupation of the conquest of bread.

But my bright-winged dreams fell woundedly to earth in a bleak little street not very many hundred yards from the Puerta del Sol. How dark the shadows were in the doorways ! But were they only shadows ? I looked again and saw that the shadows had a human outline. I saw shrivelled old women lying beside the rain-pools and little bony children with their heads between their knees. Did the angel of dreams visit them too, I wondered. Then I chanced to look up and see the name of the street. It was called *La Calle del Amor de Dios*—The Street of the Love of God.

It is a pity that the Madrileños go to bed so late. It must be difficult for them to be up and about just when Madrid is looking its best and brightest. Madrid does not often smile. Its aspect is hard and glittering. It is tempting to read into the outward physiognomy of a city an expression of its inner spirit. The soul of Madrid—if it has a soul—may be hard and glittering too, for all I know, but I don't know Madrid well enough to pass judgment. At any rate it is only just to

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recognise the part which physical conditions have played in shaping its hard-featured countenance. The stone of which it is built is white and cold—deathly white and bleakly cold on a cold grey day, in the sun sparklingly white like the facets of diamonds. Only a very few of the older buildings, and those continually menaced with demolition, afford a grateful glow of pale pink brick—the modern taste is all for snow-white stone. Moreover the air is generally dry, and the light has a peculiarly frosty, crystal-like glitter, which at times gives the solidest structures a curious effect of fragility and brittleness. Mists are rare, twilight is swift, and consequently the tender, pardoning half-tones are lacking. All contours, bereft of veils, lie naked to the eye—a merciless deprivation, for Spain never possessed the Latin genius for form.

But when Madrid does smile, it is usually just a little before eight o'clock in the morning. (I am speaking of the spring, you will understand—I can't answer for the other seasons.) Perhaps—I hope the suggestion is not unkind—it is the absence of the Madrileños that accounts for the smile. During most of the day and all the night they crowd the streets, overflowing from the seething vortex of the Puerta del Sol in black torrents down the channels of the Alcalá and the Carrera de San Jeronimo. It is not a strikingly Spanish crowd, indeed, but for the not very

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frequent mantillas of the women and the occasional stiff-brimmed hat and bullying, sinister face of the bull-fighter, it does not greatly differ from the crowds of other European capitals. But it is not a feverish and hostile crowd, as I have often felt the crowd of Paris to be, nor a prompt and preoccupied crowd, like the crowd of London. It is passive, apathetic, rather disillusionised. It resembles nothing so much as a march of the unemployed—but that, of course, is just what it is.

Before eight o'clock in the morning, however, the streets are empty or nearly so. A few municipal street scavengers are still at their posts, spraying the spotless paving stones as the priest sprays the congregation at the Asperges. I suppose it is a kind of matutinal benediction. And for incense there is the delicious odour of newly roasted coffee. Outside every café a little fire is crackling in the gutter and the beans are being briskly churned in smoke-blackened revolving globes. Ponies, carrying panniers filled with milk-cans and a rider perched uncomfortably among the cans, amble in from the country. Nobody is hurrying to the office or running to catch a train. For a brief hour or so Madrid abandons its absurd pretence of being a European capital and becomes what it was really intended to be, an agreeable provincial town.

Madrid is the parvenu of European capitals. It is without lineage. *Villa y corte* is its style—town and court; city or *ciudad* it has never been. It

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owes its dignity to the pleasure of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who fixed his residence here, so far as he can be said to have fixed it anywhere, because he liked its airs and disliked the too ecclesiastical atmosphere of the former capital, Toledo. Such comparatively ancient buildings as it possesses are inconspicuous. Cathedral it has none, though it has begun to build itself one. The character of parvenu clings to it. It apes its betters, Paris in particular. It lacks breeding, and I think it does indeed lack a soul.

But the Prado ! Yes, that is why we are here. Let us be going there, then.

The Prado has at least one advantage over the National Gallery—its situation. The National Gallery stands too near “the full tide of human existence” which roars down the Strand into Trafalgar Square to allow us peace and leisure for that recollection of the spirit, that abstraction of the mind from a distraught environment, without which we should not enter into the presence of any great work of art. The transition from one atmosphere to another is too abrupt. Our eyes still aching with the confused vision of the hurrying street, our ears vibrating with its myriad discords, we enter the building with senses wounded, as it were, and half paralysed. We are blind to the intimate signals, deaf to the murmured voices of paint.

The Museo del Prado lies aside from the main

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business of the town—from its noise, perhaps, I should rather say, for I imagine that there is more noise than business in Madrid. As the name by which it is universally known implies, it stands, or at any rate used to stand, in a meadow. The meadow has become a spacious avenue, shaded by cedars, chestnuts and plane-trees, but the grass runs up to the wall of the building still a little untrimmed and meadow-like. The building itself is as reposeful as an Italian villa. The few bombastic columns, without which no enlightened eighteenth-century architect considered any building complete, contrast incongruously with the simplicity of the garret-like storey above the cornice and the rustic, red-tiled roof.

Leaving the crowds which jostle purposelessly on the wide pavements of the Alcalá, you pass along a garden walk with grassy mounds on either side, on the summits of which are planted young and rather infirm palms. Ample-bosomed Galician nurses sit on the benches knitting, and round them play children with long brown legs, in grey check tunics encircled by black shiny belts that have a habit of slipping down just above the knee. These are the only distractions you are likely to encounter as you approach the gallery, and they do not so much distract as divert. Already before you have reached its portals you will have arrived at a certain tranquillity and repose of mind and body.

I stood for a while contemplating that delicious

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harmony which a view of the Prado presents on a sunny April morning—the dusty salmon colour of the walls, the shrill young green of the chestnuts carolling against the rich gloom of the cedars, the saffron-tinted church of San Jeronimo, with its jimped silhouette like a wedding-cake in the background, and the crystal arch of blue overhead. And yet I found that the repose which the prospect seemed to invite was disturbed by a vague and unaccountable nervousness, which prevented me from at once entering the building. Not so unaccountable, perhaps, when you come to think about it. Have you never felt anxious and perturbed with indefinite misgivings when you were about to meet a friend or friends whom you had not seen for several years? Will they have changed, you ask yourself, or have I changed, since last we met? Shall I be disappointed? Shall we still understand one another?

It was six years since I had seen the pictures in the Prado. Presumably they had not changed in the interval, but then I had. One loses every year, I think, something of that finely sensitive receptivity of youth, that quickness of response to new sights and sounds, that enviable capacity of the inexperienced senses to take deep and clear-cut impressions. In the former days the emotions lorded it in the house of the body, and if the still small voice of reason dared to insinuate a doubt or ask a question it was at once shouted down by the

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loud voices of the blood. But in the course of years the body learns to acknowledge a new master. The senses may be as keen and active as ever, but when they come hurrying in with their messages from the outer world, the emotions, grown stiff and sluggish, no longer respond to their clamorous knocking. Instead the critical faculty stands to receive the eager messengers at the door, gives them a grudging welcome, hears their reports with cold suspicion, and as often as not sends them at once about their business. A somewhat pessimistic view to take of the matter, I know. It leaves out of account the other side of the picture—the perceptions perfected with practice, the critical apparatus adjusted and refined, errors corrected, decisions given with more impartiality and exactitude. True enough it may be, but for my part I can find no adequate compensation in the complacent satisfactions of a maturer judgment for those soul-shattering shocks of crude, uncritical emotion which are one of the too liberal endowments of youth.

After all, is it not the pictures that judge us rather than we who judge them? They make a call not only upon our senses, or upon our intelligence even, but upon that secret self which lies so far beneath our surface activities. It is not a difficult matter with a slight application to get by heart the cant phrases and formulas of culture by means of which we are able to pass in the world

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for persons of liberal education and good taste. We can deceive our fellows, but these silent and august inquisitors we may not deceive. They easily pass through our defences. They interrogate us as to what we really know of the deep things of life. We cannot put them off with the facile criticisms we have got from books. They speak to us in their own language, and if we have never learnt its grammar we have to confess that we find them unintelligible. I think that looking at a very great picture is as formidable an experience as interviewing a very great man. The interview no doubt will afford us an unaffected pleasure and a certain glow of pride in the retrospect. "Yes," we shall be able afterwards to boast to our less privileged acquaintance, "I had a talk with him once," and all the while our conscience will accuse us of *suppressio veri*, for we shall know that it was he who talked to us and we who were not able to respond. And with the same certainty we know whether or not we are able to respond to words that are spoken in paint.

Somewhat dashed by these reflections, I turned away and walked up and down for a while in the shadow of the cedars, postponing this intimidating interview not with one great man but with a galleryful. Nor were my misgivings diminished when I remembered the stars that illuminate the pages of Baedeker when he arrives at the Prado. Here he leaves a track behind him thick and

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luminous as the Milky Way. I fell to wondering what every star represented in the psychological experience of the phenomenal Karl. He who had seen everything that is worth seeing, and a good deal that is not, on the whole face of this planet—and of other planets too, for all I know—could it be possible that in his super-Ulyssean travels he had not yet dulled the edge of his perceptions? What was the secret of that magical energy that enabled him to go on perambulating galleries without end in his tireless Teutonic way, responding to the diverse achievements of every school with an appropriate emotion, carefully registering each individual ecstasy with a star and a few well-chosen words of approbation? How catholic and tolerant, too, his taste! How immune he is from the petty, personal likes and dislikes of ordinary, illogical mortals like you and me, who allow ourselves to be at the mercy of every throb of colour and flow of line, who let our judgments wait upon our mood and do not ground them on the solid basis of a discernment between the artists' "early," "middle" and "late" periods. He is almost inhumanly exempt from prejudices—unless it can be called a prejudice to defer somewhat unquestioningly to the great names, to be, as it were, on the side of the big battalions. And yet he is never disdainful of mediocrity, as is the fashion of those who associate with the great; he always condescends to encourage modest merit. Familiar

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as he is with the glories of Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo and the rest of them, he has still a star or two left to bestow on Jordaens's "Family Group in a Garden" and "the five small and minutely executed landscapes and interiors of Jan Brueghel." Was he very exhausted, I wonder, after such an emotional morning in the Prado? No, somehow I fancy not. I think that he asked the porter at the vestibule quite collectedly for his umbrella (did you suppose that so prudent a traveller ever travelled without one?) and, after giving him a tip that hit the exact mean between parsimony and liberality, went off without further delay to devote his afternoon to the Academia de Bellas Artes, or it may be that he stopped on the way and lunched at a restaurant, but only after previous inquiry as to price ("advisable and customary"). You and I, dear reader, cannot hope to emulate the exploits of this super-traveller. I fear that we lack the mental, moral and physical stamina of the indefatigable Teuton. In all probability we shall seek repose on a plush-covered settee long before we arrive at those "five small and minutely executed landscapes and interiors." In the confusion of our unmethodical delight we shall fail to preserve the exact demarcations of these "early," "middle" and "late" periods. Try as we will we shall never be able to train our emotions to express themselves in such apt and communicable phrases as "charming for its lucid

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colouring," "highly attractive and picturesque," or "remarkable for its energy of conception." And afterwards we shall probably be overcharged for our lunch, for I am sure we shall never succeed in remembering that advisable and customary previous inquiry as to price.

"Do you realise that you have kept us hanging about outside the building for an unconscionable time, listening to your impertinences about a gentleman for whose painstaking observations you have probably many times been sincerely thankful? Would it not have been more fitting to have taken this opportunity of acknowledging your obligations to him? In any case, may we not now ascend the steps and enter the gallery?"

Truly I apologise, injured reader. It is indeed unfortunate that you have to put up with so egotistical a cicerone. But one moment—may I draw your attention in passing to this figure who sits in an arm-chair at the top of the first flight of steps and greets us with a brassy scowl? A high broad brow, deep-set eyes, abrupt firm nose, high cheek-bones, pursed lips, square jaw—is it the face of a peasant or a thinker, or of one who was both? His eyes peer out beneath shaggy eyebrows with a fixed, questioning stare which seems to bid the object of his vision deliver up its most intimate secret—the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This is assuredly not a man who

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would extenuate anything, and yet not one, perhaps, of whom it could be said that he set down naught in malice. Do you not recognise him? Allow me to introduce you—Don Francisco José Goya y Lucientes! Goya in his later years, I need hardly add, Goya irascible, ironical, disillusionised, Goya who had supped long at the feast of life and found that even its sweets leave a bitter taste behind.

In the vestibule we are challenged by a uniformed Cerberus whom we are compelled to propitiate with a walking-stick and a peseta. If the Prado were a limited company it would surely pay a substantial dividend. The only day on which the entry is free is Sunday, and that is only half a day. But if the authorities are somewhat exacting to the visitor they are generous to the student. They allow him, or rather her, on six days out of six and a half to unfurl her canvases in front of any masterpiece she chooses, and as she is usually a person not without discrimination she chooses precisely those which the visitor has come all the way from London, Berlin or New York expressly to see. She is moreover exasperatingly industrious. It is in vain that you will attempt to forestall her arrival or outstay her departure. She is also ambitious, and, far from being content to make a reduced copy of the picture of her choice, she is careful to reproduce it in its exact dimensions—perhaps the more careful about this as it is the only

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feature of the original which she succeeds in reproducing with any appreciable degree of exactitude. It is therefore both more economical and more profitable to visit the Prado on a Sunday, the day on which the student is compelled to suspend her never-ending studies—a day which I trust she spends in contrition for the enormities she has been perpetrating all the week.

And now we enter the gallery—a gallery not in the general but in the literal sense of the word, a long, long corridor, surely the longest corridor in the world. An ill-devised system on which to exhibit pictures, I am inclined to think. Whether it is on account of the exhaustion of the air, or the slipperiness of the floor, a puzzling but never-failing delight to directors, or the absence of seats, which wonderfully stimulates the desire to sit down, a picture gallery invariably induces a special fatigue. But the fatigue is intensified when at the very entrance you are confronted with a vista of canvases converging with a striking perspective to a point in the remotest distance. The spirit, however willing, sinks at once. All this acreage of paint to look at, examine, discriminate, appreciate, digest, comment on, rhapsodise over, carry away and lay up in the memory—it can't be done! It takes away your appetite for paint as a table spread with all the courses of a long table d'hôte would take away your appetite for food. The *maîtres d'hôtel* are wiser in their

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generation than the directors of public picture galleries. They know how to lead you on gently and expectantly from course to course, setting the dishes before you separately and with a ceremonious deference which suggests the belief that each one is the chef's *chef-d'œuvre*. The director on the other hand stuns you with one stupendous *coup d'œil*. It is magnificent, and, since the building is there and has to be used, I suppose it is inevitable.

In my dreams I sometimes visit the picture galleries of Utopia. They are designed on the principle of one room one masterpiece, and the room is proportioned to the size of the masterpiece. You do not slip on the floor, neither are you compelled to stand like a prisoner in the dock, for the floors are thickly carpeted, and in front of each work of art are placed a few easy-chairs. No noisily shod person tramples past you, no broad-shouldered person stands in front of you, no weak-minded person quacks ineptitudes in your ear. For the space of a quarter of an hour you are guaranteed the sole possession of the room, accompanied by your friends if you have any. Smoking is not prohibited and cigarettes and liqueurs are provided at a small charge. Thus that portion of your mental energy which in the ordinary picture gallery is occupied in endeavouring to shut off from your consciousness disconcerting sights and sounds is set free to play upon the canvas.

“ But this is neither the time nor the place——”

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Very well then. Let us pass through the *rotonda de entrada*, where there is nothing to detain us, enter the ante-room of the long gallery and—*La Maja Desnudo! La Maja Vestida!*

“What is the matter? Why do you talk like that?”

The Goyas! The resounding familiar names! This ante-room is the goal of our pilgrimage. We are arrived!

VII

INSIDE THE PRADO

ARE you one of those who seize their joys avidly the instant they offer themselves, or do you deliberately defer them in order to linger over the *hors-d'œuvre* of anticipation? It is a point on which travelling companions should be agreed. Not knowing your views on this question I suppose I am at liberty to go my own sweet way, and mine is the procrastinating way. It doesn't really matter much in this case, for either way there is joy, whether we stop in the Goya ante-room or whether we first take a preliminary saunter down the corridor.

To walk down that corridor is to run the gauntlet of the Renaissance. It is a crisis in a man's life. His spirit must indeed be inaccessible to the impressions of sense if it has not suffered a change, and a lasting change, by the time he has reached the far end of the gallery. He gains a newer and more splendid vision of the world and of the world's master, man.

Had Keats walked down this gallery I am sure he would have gone straight back to his hotel and written a sonnet "On first looking at Titian's

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‘Bacchanal.’” If Homer gave a picture of the radiant dawn of the world, this is an illustration of its noble noon, the moment when the flower of life hung full-blown, brooding on its own perfection. Here in a friendly conjunction of sun and sea and sky (the last brutally repainted it is true), the breasted earth, cool shade, wine, and the white and berry-coloured bodies of men and women, supple yet sculpturesque, the hand of man has for once expressed all that his heart has dreamt of an earthly paradise. It is the challenge of the senses to the soul. Then, turning from the maturity of manhood, the wise-eyed painter envisages infancy, painting little children in the “Garden of the Loves” as they have never been painted before or since, with all the qualities they have borrowed both from bees and flowers, swarming riotously in busy play. Next “Charles the Fifth on the Field of Mühlberg,” something more than emperor, a man, with an imperial soul. A step or two farther and we have stepped over the edge of the world, into the mystic Beyond of El Greco’s visionary gaze. The familiar human form puts on a strange flame-like quality, it has already lost the touch of earth. It repels and fascinates. Come away—this is limbo!

But there, on the left, a door opens into a cool and airy room. How fresh it looks! It must be better ventilated in there. Yes, it was ventilated some hundreds of years ago by a man who ventilated the whole palace of art, one Diego Velasquez. He

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opened one of its windows and the fresh air that he let in will keep it sweet till it crumbles into dust. Did you think you knew Velasquez, having seen the "Venus" of Trafalgar Square and the "Infanta Margarita" of the Louvre? You were mistaken. He bides at home. Other masters may travel abroad for all the world to see, but the world must come to see Velasquez in Madrid. "Las Lanzas," "Las Meninas," "Las Hilanderas"—who knows not these knows not Velasquez. But we must not enter that room now, for if we did I think we should stay there until the custodians clapped their hands at dusk. And now the magnificent Rubens in his high-handed way appropriates the walls of the long gallery, just condescending to leave a little space for his clever pupil, Van Dyck. One cannot but applaud him—as one applauds the large splendour of a handsome woman, content that another should enjoy her intimacy. But here Rubens is for once in his lyric rather than in his epic mood. "The Three Graces" was assuredly painted for his own delight, not for the delight of princes. And here is his "Adoration," a subject after his own royal heart, kings doing homage to the King of kings—by no means a masterpiece, somewhat of an improvisation, a square yard or two of canvas covered as easily as a lesser man would throw off a sketch, but a picture before which, by your leave, we will pause a while until our blood runs quicker.

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Murillo—he too has a room all to himself at the end of the gallery, rather a hot and stuffy room, I think, and don't you almost fancy that you detect a whiff of incense? If you choose to go in I will wait for you outside. Oh yes, he was a painter, but in there I am always reminded of those waxwork figures in the Jueves Santo procession at Barcelona. I have an idea that it was he who introduced sentimentalism into the Catholic Church.

And now let us go along the passage that runs round the apse behind the long gallery and pass into the room—or, to use the more sumptuous language of Baedeker, the saloon—of Ribera.

“But how dark it is in here!”

Yes, we are in Spain.

“But surely—I don't quite understand.”

Then let me explain. No, I am afraid I can't explain altogether—I can only give you an illustration of what I mean.

A few days before I left England I went one afternoon to the National Gallery, with the object of discovering whether, from a cursory glance at the pictures in the Spanish room, I could distinguish any characteristic which broadly differentiated the Spanish school from the other schools of European painting. The afternoon was dull, it was growing late; there was but half-an-hour before the gallery closed. I passed through the Dutch rooms, noticing how like the atmosphere

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of the actual day that I had just left outside were those moist, grey, chill spaces of air spread above the watery landscapes. No mistaking the nationality of these painters. This portrait that they had left of that reclaimed foreshore which served them for a fatherland was no less faithful than those that they painted of their contemporaries and friends. Omitting the Venetians, for I was pressed for time, I walked through the rooms where the rest of the Italians were hung! What clarity! What transparency! What a crystalline quality of light. True, they did not appear to have been pre-occupied with the problem of light as were the Impressionists. They did not paint objects solely for the sake of clothing them with atmosphere or diapering them with the play of sun and shade. Their interest was centred upon the figure of a woman, or a group of angels, or the columns of a baldachino, focussed intensely upon form. The light which shone upon these objects and all round them seemed to have been rather of the nature of an accident—it just happened, without deliberation or forethought. They seemed to have been aware of it subconsciously. They painted the clear air as they breathed it, instinctively, in both processes regarding it as a means rather than an end in itself, accepting it casually as a common fact. For them it was in literal truth “the common light of day.”

Then I passed abruptly into the Spanish room.

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What had happened ? Had the leisurely twilight of the English afternoon prematurely hurried into night ? Had a fog or a thundercloud made away with the precious leavings of the sun ? The pictures were opaque, cloudy, glum. I found it to be true, as a discerning critic¹ has remarked, that "in a gallery of seventeenth-century pictures of different schools a Spanish picture produces the contrast of a man in mourning amid a carnival crowd."

Supposing, I reflected, I had not known where any of the pictures I had just seen had been painted, what should I have guessed about the countries of their origin ? The Dutch pictures I should have said must have been painted in a climate where the sun was a niggard, hiding itself behind vapoury films, a land of faint, grey, uniform light, and I should have guessed rightly. I should have declared that the Italian pictures had been produced in a country where light was lavish, constant, of a dry diamond-like brilliance, and, although I might have underestimated the variety of its effects, I should have again guessed in the main rightly. And the Spanish pictures—these I should have supposed were painted in a land of perpetual shadow, a region of polar night, or beneath the pall of an eternal thundercloud. And how wrongly I should have guessed everyone who has been to Spain well knows. For the

¹ Mr Charles Ricketts : " Pictures in the Prado."

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light of Spain is not essentially different, so far as I am aware, from the light of Italy. Whence comes then this blindness of the Spaniard to a truth which the Italian cannot help but confess on every inch of his canvas and fresco ?

But was there no light at all in these dim pictures ? I stood in the midst of the twilit room and let my gaze sweep in a hurried circuit round the walls to see if it would be arrested by any sudden gleam of light. Yes, here a pale ghostly face shone out—Philip IV. ; here was a shimmering luminous body—Venus ; here a phosphorescent glow in the supernatural halo round the head of the Christ at the Column. That was all that I noted in this rapid circular survey. You see it was Velasquez who supplied the illumination. And it is to be observed that whatever light there was came from the human face and form. I know that the pictures in the Spanish room at the National Gallery are far from being representative of Spanish painting, but there is my illustration, for what it is worth. And what I saw in the Prado confirmed the inference I had drawn in Trafalgar Square. (I except Velasquez. But then, in spite of his Spanish gravity, I always have a difficulty in reconciling him with Spain.)

Yes, it is dark in the saloon of Ribera. The light on the canvases is not the healthful glow of day, but a fitful, lurid glare, striking the objects sideways, giving them a preposterous relief and

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glooming, grotesque shadows like those which a single candle in a room throws upon the walls. Relief, facial relief, that is what the painter has sought most eagerly. The even play of equable daylight on all the planes of the face suppresses relief; the horizontal glare, limelight and candle-light, gives it emphasis. And why this search for relief? Because relief allies itself with the dramatic element. Not the colour of the face, not the tones, not the texture, but the architecture of bone; the moulding of brow and nose and jaw, betokens character. And character has always been the pre-occupation of the Spaniard, even when he has been an artist. His heart was never in æsthetics—again making exception of that great parenthesis, Velasquez—unless he could in some sort subordinate æsthetics to drama, to the interplay of character. Thus we may almost say that he discovered light somewhat accidentally in his search for character. We do not find him delighting in it for its own sake. Above all, its radiant, serene, clarifying quality he seems to have ignored, or to have been unaware of. He liked it best vivid, lurid, sensational. He seized upon it as a means to help him to emphasise and dramatise the one subject that absorbed him, the soul of man.

I don't for a moment pretend to have solved the problem of the joylessness, lurking like a worm in the bud, of much of Spanish painting—for absence of light is absence of joy. There are some who will

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point significantly to the domination of the Church and whisper darkly of the Inquisition. Like most easy and superficial explanations it will not bear testing. Why should the Church have blotted out the light in Spain and bathed in it in Italy? And if it is really conceivable that the ecclesiastics in Spain should have instituted an Index Expurgatorius of colours and scrutinised the painter's palette for the hue of heresy, it was not because they were churchmen but *Spanish* churchmen—which leaves us as far from a solution as we were before. But if anything can be safely predicated of the æsthetic sense of the Church it is her rather childlike fondness for gay colours, in missals, in glass, in vestments, in cardinals' robes, in all her processional splendours. Another and more plausible explanation will be supplied by the art historian. He will remind me that this obsession of gloom, of intense shadow fitfully lit by lightning flashes, was not peculiar to Spain but was the vogue of the hour, a consequence of the inevitable twilight that crept over European art after the glorious sun of the Renaissance had set. It gave its name to the fashionable school of the day, the Tenebrosi, the lovers of darkness. It had its seat not in Spain but in Naples, and its great exponent, Caravaggio, was the master on whom Ribera modelled himself. In art, Spain has always been a great borrower of fashions, now French, now Flemish, now Italian, and I am ready to admit

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that she took the hint of the Tenebrose fashion from Naples. But I cannot rest in this solution. Of all the various attires that Spain tried on, this one alone suited her. It was what, wittingly or unwittingly, she had been waiting for. It was congenial to her temper. Italy discarded it, for her it was an unnatural aberration, but the habit of darkness clung to Spain—even the lucid Velasquez could not alter the mode. And it is to be observed that the preoccupation of Velasquez himself was not so much with light pure and undefiled, light absolute, as with light muffled, furtive and in shadow, imprisoned in the vast gloomy chambers of the Alcazar, lurking unsuspected in the folds of sombre velvet cloaks and the reticulation of black brocade.

The tradition persisted into modern times. Goya—well, we shall come to him later. You can recognise it in Diaz by his inky, thundery skies and the deep gloom of his forests, a gloom intensified by unreal theatrical gleams. Even the sun-worshipping Impressionists, to whom Spain with all the rest of the world paid the compliment of imitation, could not finally slay it. The canvases of Zuloaga, perhaps the most characteristic Spanish painter of to-day, might be said to be illumined, if the expression were not a misnomer, by a light that never was on land or sea, a light that is neither that of night nor day, an ashen reflection from a sky in which the sun has never risen.

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Certainly this preference for shadows, for sombre colouring, lightless, or broken by harsh unequal light, was something more than the temporary fashion of a school. Nor was it merely an artistic preference. If a black shadow fell across Spanish art, it was thrown there by life itself. The Spaniard was already clad in black before the rest of Europe had forsaken the gay colours of the Renaissance, and when he dominated the sister peninsula in the sixteenth century he even imposed for a time his sombre costume on the colour-loving Italians, as you may see in the portraits of Moretto and Moroni in the National Gallery. I am convinced that it is not in the dominance of the Church or in any passing influence that the explanation of this dark Plutonian habit will be found but in the character of the people itself. Does it derive from some sombre strain of African blood in the race? Or has it affinities with the keen Iberian sense of tragedy, the Iberian recurrent despair and denial of life? Or is it merely a secular weariness of the sun?

Let us linger a moment or two longer in this room, for although Ribera lived all his life in Italy, and is perhaps best known by his Italian nickname of *Lo Spagnoletto*, he is in many respects the most significant of Spanish painters. We have noticed the sombreness of the pictures. Look for a moment at the subjects—what do you find? Remember these are the works of a man who had sunned himself in Italy, who, it might be supposed, had

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thrown off the oppression of the Spanish mind, escaped, if you will, from the shadow of the Church into the bright air of paganism. Do you therefore expect to find beautiful light women artlessly disguised as Madonnas; classical heroes rejoicing in the pride of life; nymphs, satyrs, love-gods, all the paraphernalia of the Renaissance *joie de vivre*? You will find instead old men, decrepit, cadaverous, their skins tanned and corrugated, ingrained with dirt, scarified with sores, their bodies displaying with a painful obtrusiveness all the stigmata of old age. There are tortures, executions, martyrdoms, here Ixion bound to his fiery wheel, there a colossal Prometheus with the vulture plucking at his entrails. Significant as illustrating the peculiarly Spanish relish of pain, and the deliberate realism demanded in the representation of it. It is the intrusion into art of the temper which delights in bull-fights, or, more justly perhaps, of the temper which finds a certain sad exhilaration in the spectacle of tragedy.

But there is one picture which I insist on your enjoying, although it is a torture scene, "The Martyrdom of St Bartholomew." As the director of the gallery has thoughtfully furnished the saloon with a luxurious settee, you can contemplate the work in comfort. The saint, a naked man in the prime of life, is seen in a sinking posture, his arms outstretched and his hands bound to the two extremities of a wooden beam that is suspended by

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a rope from an upright pole or mast. The rope passes through a pulley and is grasped at the other end by two ruffians who are hoisting the saint to a more elevated position in order to facilitate the operation of flaying him. On either side a little group of soldiers and spectators calmly watches the preparation for the martyrdom. The object of the picture, presumably, is to arouse our compassion for the sufferings of the saint and our admiration of his fortitude, and yet it defeats its purpose by its very beauty. Me, at any rate, it filled with sheer delight. The design is intensely exhilarating; the colours are subdued but glow with a kind of suppressed splendour. For once Ribera has rolled back his thunder-curtain, leaving the face of heaven bare—a great cavity of blue, filled with shining cloud and rushing wind. The tug of the brawny arms upon the rope, the backward pull of the bodies, communicated such an agreeable thrill of healthy muscular strain that I am afraid my sympathies were all with the executioners. Regardless of the unhappy plight of the saint, I was glad to know that they would go on tugging till the end of time, displaying their fine play of muscle and strong vitality for the delight of innumerable generations of spectators. And yet the delight is not wholly contained in the attitude of those two villains. The picture is one of those the exhilarating effect of which is not obviously accountable. I suppose it must spring

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out of some secret of design, some magic in the thrust of lines and the balance of masses, which I am not able, and do not greatly care, to analyse. I am only too glad when the inquisitive mind goes to sleep and the senses, which never stay to ask a question, rush out unabashed and take their greedy fill of pleasure.

The directors of the Prado have been wise in collecting together the portrait pictures in the Sala de Retratos. Of course there is an obvious inconvenience in having to go from room to room when you wish to study the works of a single painter instead of being able to confront his total achievement in one place ; but for this inconvenience there is more than compensation in the impression produced by the full assemblage of the men and women who have helped to build up a nation, the collective portrait of the race.

I think that portraits acquire a special significance when you are alone in a strange town. Your solitude throws you more upon the society of those whose home is in the public picture gallery. If you count no friend among the living citizens you are all the more at leisure to cultivate the friendship of those dead but immortal inhabitants who are always ready to welcome you whenever you choose to visit them in their quiet rooms. Their appointments never fail. And the friendships you strike up with them are full of incident. They have their

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periods of growth and decline, their romances and caprices, their sudden inexplicable lapses into indifference and dislike. (I well remember the day of my fatal quarrel with Mrs Siddons—Lawrence's Mrs Siddons, I mean, who was the darling of my adolescence. We are still unreconciled, and when I go past her now I always feel that there are reproaches in those appealing eyes, moist with tears—tears that I don't believe in.) And there emerge too, from these chance acquaintances, those enduring sworn friendships, tested and approved in hours of heaviness and despair, when wise and candid eyes looked into yours and understood all that your living fellows had misunderstood, solaced and heartened you—the only friendships perhaps that are perfectly secure from the hazards of change and time and death. Happy is the man who has these staunch friends posted up and down, like accredited ambassadors, in the cities of Europe. More powerful than ambassadors are they, for they can help him when the embassies of his native country shall fail. No more can he suffer the dire solitude of great cities—if he travel from Paris to St Petersburg, from Milan to Madrid, he smiles to himself knowing that at the end of his journey he shall find a brother.

I am glad that I have some of these friends in the Prado. I do not know their names. They are portraits of unknown men, *hombres desconocidos*, but known to me. El Greco painted them. Gravely

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and sadly they look at you over the rigid ruffles that hang like millstones round their necks. These are spiritual portraits, portraits of the inner rather than the outer man. If these were typical Spaniards of the age of the Armada, and I believe they were, then I think the history of Spain needs to be rewritten. No haughty grandees, they, nor heretic-burning bigots, nor truculent buccaneers. Their pallid, thought-worn faces seem to betoken an inner life that burnt with so intense a flame as well-nigh to consume their bodily forces. They are mystics, yet with the shrewd practical judgment which is not unusually the complement of a sane mysticism. Their eyes are troubled and perplexed, as if they had grown tired with long contemplation of the high mysteries of life and death. They have that look of disillusion which comes, perhaps, to all who expect from life more than life can afford. Certainty and the confidence that comes with certainty they never conquered; at most they attained a kind of serenity that is more than half resignation. As we gazed at one another I could not help but recall those portraits of their contemporaries and foemen, the rebel Protestant burgomasters of Haarlem. How much at ease in the world are these prosperous men of business, how comforted by the sufficing boon of food and drink, how confident of themselves and of their world, how unvisited by doubts of the fundamental rightness of things ! No need to go to the historians

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to learn whether in the contest they or their Spanish foes were successful. They are the men who are born for success, or what is called success by men, the spoilt children of Fortune. These others are plainly predestined to failure—the *enfants perdus* of the world, they for whom the blanks are reserved in the lottery of life. These I delight to count my friends. And when I grow to hate this hard, glittering Madrid, so eager now to achieve that kind of success of which the Dutch burgomasters possessed the key, I am glad that I can go and converse with these forlorn ones who drank the tears of disaster, and learn of their wisdom, which is the foolishness of the world.

Another friend I have in the Sala de Retratos, an old friend, Blessed Thomas More. As it is the worldly-minded Rubens who has painted him one is not surprised to find that his blessedness is somewhat in abeyance—but that is not altogether Rubens' fault, for the martyrdom of course preceded the beatification. The impression the painter has left of him is just that of a shrewd, intellectual, humorous, delightful, lovable man, a lover of this world—no doubt of the other also, but emphatically of this. His face is a trifle flushed and his eyes moist—I fancied he has just dined, wisely and well, as all wise men do. A smile lurks about the corners of the mobile mouth and in the puckered eyes, whimsical and ironical, as of a man who discerned the touch of humour in the gravity of things and

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saw in tragedy itself the great jest of Fate. He knows the times are out of joint, but he does not curse the providence that calls on him to help to set them right, though he may marvel at the unfitness of the choice. He cheerfully sets out on that road which well he knew must end abruptly on Tower Hill. But that need not hinder a man from dining well !

Not far away sits another figure whose fame, if not whose character, is well known to history, Mary of England, wife of Philip of Spain. I was glad to meet her too, for she has been sorely mis-handled by the historians and I felt that Antonio Mor would tell me the truth about her at last. I cannot pretend that I was greatly drawn to the lady—after all, one does not look for the pattern of womanhood in the daughters of Henry the Eighth. She is a forbidding person, though most transparently well-meaning. She sits stiffly upright in her chair, square-shouldered, angular, awkward. She is holding a rose in her hand, a peculiarly inappropriate action. I am sure it was not her own idea to hold it—perhaps the painter wanted a touch of colour, or perhaps she was so awkward with her hands that he thought this was the best way of disposing of one of them at any rate. All her nature is revealed in the way that she holds that rose. She doesn't hold it, she nips it as though it were a nettle and would sting her if she didn't nip it hard. She neither looks at it nor smells

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it : she has no use for flowers. She looks out of the rather oblique eyes that so often go with narrow minds, upon a world which she only half understands and of which she more than half disapproves. A slight frown marks her disapprobation and also her possession of a fixed idea. Her large brow and firm mouth indicate a certain practical ability. If only she had had to keep a dame's school instead of a kingdom, what a success she would have made of it !

A portrait of the Spanish race you will find in the Sala de Retratos, but where in the whole of the Prado will you find the portrait of Spain ? There is a special delight to the traveller in discovering in a nation's picture galleries a map and mirror of the country he has been travelling through, in seeing it over again not with the eyes of a foreigner but through the eyes of its own sons. The stranger need go no farther than Trafalgar Square to find the woodland heart of England, its shining rivers and windy coasts ; the greyseas and skies and flat rich pastures of Holland are all contained in The Hague and Amsterdam ; and in the local galleries of Italy what a delightful auxiliary pleasure comes from recognising in the little sparkling landscapes behind the figures of saints glimpses of familiar hills and valleys, the very view perhaps that you look out upon from your hotel window. If in the Prado you expect a

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new and perfected vision of the snowy sierras and sunburnt uplands of Spain, you will be disappointed. For the Spanish painters Spain might as well never have existed. Velasquez, again proving his exceptional quality, of course took account of it—is it not unfolded in splendid horizons behind the equestrian portrait of Philip IV.? In his “St Antony visiting St Paul” it is not accessory but principal. But apart from Velasquez and until we arrive at Goya, the only Spanish landscapes in the Prado that I can recollect are those of Velasquez’s pupil, Mazo. The quiet majesty of the gardens of Aranjuez, which are less gardens than woods, he painted with unmistakable affection in cool silver tones, but his true native country is that exciting No Man’s Land of romance, destined to become the favourite holiday resort of the eighteenth century, where the rocks are more intimidating, the waterfalls more gushing, the shadows more bituminous than in any other country under heaven, and where there is no hill-top that lacks its classical temple falling into romantic disrepair.

I am again without a ready explanation to offer for this indifference of the Spanish painter to the landscape of his own country. It cannot be charged to lack of patriotism, for that passionate, narrow, regional patriotism which scarcely anywhere else will you find so deeply rooted as in Spain, is precisely the kind which as a rule expresses itself

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most intensely in the arts. Did not Goya himself rank his love of his native place with his art as the two master passions of his life? "*En acordarme de Zaragoza y pintura me quemo vivo*" (I burn when I think of Zaragoza and painting). Nor yet is it due to lack of intimate knowledge, for a remarkable fact in the history of Spanish painting is the large number of painters who sprang from the soil. It has been stated that the cause lay not in the apathy of the artists but in the nature of the commissions given by those they worked for—"portraiture and religious subjects were the only work demanded of them." Apart from the fact that these conditions were by no means peculiar to Spain at the time, the theory obliges us to credit the Spaniard with a quality of submissiveness in which he is strikingly deficient. If his heart had been really in the business, he could very well have served up a landscape disguised as a portrait, which would have satisfied at the same time the vanity of his patron and his own desire to express his love of nature. Just such a picture is Velasquez's equestrian portrait of Philip IV., which might be classed with equal justification either as portraiture or landscape. And did not Giovanni Bellini, when commissioned to paint "The Death of St Peter Martyr," produce one of the most exquisite landscapes of the world?

The love of natural scenery for its own sake is admittedly a flower of slow growth in art, and

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usually only blooms when civilisation has reached a certain degree of complexity. Even in England as late as the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for our very mild English hills to be described by such unflattering epithets as "bald" and "horrid." Nature is first loved in its somewhat utilitarian aspect of fertility, for the sake of its green pastures and still waters.

Our English landscapists delighted in cornfields and hayfields, thick woods, cattle browsing in the meadows, the tamed grandeur of parks, all the accessories of the prosperous farm. They preferred the agricultural opulence of the home counties to the uncultivated tracts of the north and west. The ragged barrenness of Crome's "Slate Quarries" was an adventurous experiment, and perhaps has not even yet received its rightful meed of estimation. For the appreciation of nature in its wilder moods a touch of the romantic temper is required.

In its general character Spain is harsh, barren, savage, African. The oases of vegetation are sparse and precious in the midst of its burning tablelands. Its waste solitudes are oppressive, monotonous, sparing in half-lights and gradations of colour. It does not recreate the spirit or easily awaken sensations of joy and repose. . . . But is it not "romantic"? Nature is never romantic—man is, or at any rate has been ever since the Romantics discovered Romance. For the Spaniard the romance of his rocks and sierras was a vein as

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undiscovered and unexploited as that of the precious metals buried within them. He viewed them realistically, with the realistic peasant mind, knowing well what physical hardships they imposed upon him, with what sweat of labour he must subdue them to his will, how grudgingly they yielded him his corn and oil and wine. He felt instinctively that nature was hostile to him.

I think that even from the window of a railway carriage you may divine something of his attitude towards nature in his way of settling himself upon the countryside. In England and France the labourer lives close to Nature, in the midst of her, on equal terms, free, friendly and fearless; his scattered cottages and farms are embraced by the fields; he seems almost to prefer her company to that of his fellows, or if he gathers with his kind in towns and hamlets, these are not abruptly isolated from the country, but spill themselves upon it, are edged with loose and indefinite fringes. In Spain the peasants appear to shun the open country, crowd together with a kind of fear in large villages, compact and sharp-edged, which crouch beneath the sentinel tower of a fortress-like church. Every morning a little after dawn the labourers sally forth in a great band, like men making a sortie from a beleaguered city, and return at nightfall weary with the day-long contest in the fields. Is it not natural that the Spanish painters who were of peasant blood should never have

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been quite able to detach themselves from the peasant point of view? They viewed nature not through the softening haze of romance but clouded with an inherited sinister apprehension.

To-day of course it is otherwise. The old mistrust of the naked earth is gone. The prison life of cities has bred a nostalgia for the airy, untenanted spaces. As soon as the spring is signalled on the hills the Spanish artist quits his studio—it is usually situated in Paris—no less eagerly than his cosmopolitan brothers, and hastens to the purifying solitudes of nature as to the charities of his mother's breast. Yet even still he hangs back a little, I think, from that inexorable, inhospitable heart of central Spain. He prefers the sparkle and fresh breezes of the coast, the languors of the Moorish south, the places where the sleeping voluptuous animal is more at ease. You will find Sorolla on the sunny beach of San Sebastian, Rusiñol in the scented gardens of the Alhambra. But the doors of the Prado have not yet opened to receive the quiet reveries of Rusiñol or the bright and vivid snapshots of Sorolla.

VIII

THE TAPESTRY CARTOONS

LET us descend the long flight of stone steps leading into the cellars beneath the Prado. Did you ask why? Because in this underworld a grateful nation exposes to a dim but public view one of the earliest phases of Goya's art—the designs which he executed for the tapestries of the royal palaces of the Pardo and the Escorial.

From the days of the Catholic Kings onwards Spain has always had a special love for tapestries. There is a sumptuousness and splendour, an obvious and easily calculated wealth, in these laborious products of the loom which appeals to a temperament that delights in magnificence rather than in beauty. Moreover, they lend themselves more readily than paintings to civic and ecclesiastical pomp, to processions, *fiestas* and *autos*. The taste is yet alive. We have seen how during Holy Week the citizens of Zaragoza promenade with a careless pride up and down their cathedral aisles, when these are transformed by gorgeous hangings into palatial corridors; and I have passed down the Alcalá in Madrid at the time of the Fiestas Constantinas and have seen the white walls

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ablaze with embroidered cloths and silk hangings and tapestries, and among them the modern reproductions of these same designs by Goya which are buried in the cellars of the Prado.

Originally the tapestries came from Flanders, from Arras, the cradle of the art, whence they were known as *paños de Ras*; but at an early date there were native factories in Seville and Madrid. One of the rooms of the factory of Santa Isabel, with girls spinning and weaving among the dusty sunbeams, provided Velasquez with a subject of gleaming and intricate beauty, "*Las Hilanderas*." When, after the War of the Spanish Succession, the Bourbons succeeded to the crown of Spain, Philip V. established the factory of Santa Barbara in a suburb of Madrid, and entrusted it to the direction of the Fleming, Vandergoten.¹ In 1762 the management passed into the hands of a painter who was the recognised dictator of the arts in Spain at this period, the egregious Bohemian, Antonio Rafael Mengs.

Possibly you had never heard of Mengs—so brief is the bubble reputation of the Academician. But Mengs was a very great man in his time, a fact which is surely somewhat prejudicial to the time. (It is our pictures that judge us, you see!) Mengs was a fine example of the type of painter who breathes more easily in the close atmosphere of

¹ Charles Yriarte, in his "*Life of Goya*," states that it was Philip V. who introduced the taste for tapestries into Spain!

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academies than in the open air of life. His was the nature which begets academies and of which academies are begotten. His very name, with its reminiscence of Correggio and the great Umbrian, was academic, but for that the would-be prophetic soul of his father must be held answerable. His life was academic. For three years, under the superintendence of his father, painter to the Court of Saxony, he studied antique sculpture and the frescoes of Raphael and Michelangelo by day and devoted himself to mastering the technique of painting in oils by night. The contrast with Goya's manner of employing his time in Rome leaps to the mind. If report be true, the only museum that he greatly cared to study was the eternal museum of the street, where are to be found the archetypes of all the masters, and his nights he devoted to investigating a more intricate lore than the technique of painting in oils. He cut straight into the heart of life. Mengs, the industrious apprentice, perambulating his galleries with the indefatigability of a Baedeker, took a circuitous route and never arrived there in the end. He arrived instead at the conclusion that the painter must borrow expression from Raphael, grace and harmony from Correggio, truth and charm of colour from Titian. Goya borrowed from two more generous lenders than these—Nature and his own soul.

While making learned researches among the

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classical beauties of Pompeii and Herculaneum, Mengs was discovered by the King of Naples, who was on the eve of sailing for Spain to ascend the throne of that kingdom, which his brother's death had left vacant. Charles III., with creditable aspiration to play the part of Mæcenæ, though Nature had not cast him for the rôle, summoned the namesake of Raphael to Madrid, and despatched a man-of-war to convey him to the coasts of Spain. Mengs came and conquered. He was appointed painter to the King and director of the Academia de San Fernando, received a salary of twelve hundred and fifty pounds a year, a house, a carriage, and the title of "Excellency." He became arbiter of the arts of Spain.

For a more intimate portrait of the man himself we must turn to the memoirs of that prince of polite rascals, Casanova, whose bitter pen sketched so many inimitable vignettes of the more scandalous side of the eighteenth century. Whilst in Madrid, waiting Micawber-like for something to turn up, the Venetian, who had a friend as well as an enemy at every court, spent some of his abundant leisure in the society of the court painter.

In his malicious, satirical way, he relates the following significant anecdote. "One day I ventured to tell him that the hand of a figure which I was looking at in one of his pictures was faulty, because the fourth finger was shorter than the index. He answered with some bitterness

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that so it ought to be, and, in proof, showed me his hand. I began to laugh and showed him mine, remarking that I was sure the formation of my hand was the same as that of all the descendants of Adam.

“ ‘From whom do you suppose that I am descended then ?’

“ ‘Of that I know nothing, but it’s certain you are not of my species.’

“ ‘It’s you who are not of mine, nor of that of any other men, for all well-formed hands of men and women are like mine and not like yours.’

“ ‘I bet you a hundred doubloons you are wrong.’

“ He got up, threw down his palette and brushes, and rang for his servants, remarking :

“ ‘Now we shall see.’

“ When the servants came he looked at their hands, examined them and found the index finger shorter than the annular. For the first time I saw him laugh, and seeking to end the dispute with a jest he said :

“ ‘I am delighted to be able to boast of being unique in something.’ ”

But it is clear that he was considerably upset by that miscalculation of the fraction of an inch.

Some remarks of his on the subject of finish in painting, which Casanova records, are even more illuminating.

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“He had painted a Magdalene which was in truth of a surprising beauty. For ten days he had said to me every morning, ‘This evening the picture will be finished.’ One day I remarked to him that he had made a mistake the day before in telling me that the picture would be finished in the evening.

“‘No,’ he said, ‘for to the eyes of ninety-nine connoisseurs out of a hundred it *would* appear to be finished. But I am jealous of the judgment of the hundredth and I look at it with his eyes. You must know that there is no picture in the world that is more than relatively finished. This Magdalene will be finished only when I stop working on it, and even then it will only be finished relatively, for it is certain that if I were to work on it one day more it would be more finished. In your Petrarch there is not a sonnet that is really finished. Of whatsoever comes from the hand or mind of man nothing is perfect—unless it be a mathematical calculation.’ ”

Thus the oracle of the academies. For him art would appear to be not merely long but interminable; genius very literally an infinite capacity for taking pains, conditioned by an infinite number of days to take pains in; and perfection possible only in so far as the work of art approached the incontrovertible logic of a mathematical calculation. Goya too had something to say about finish. “A picture is finished,” he remarked,

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“when its effect is true.” One day more and it would be not more but less finished.

It must be set down to the credit of Mengs that he was free enough from prejudice to admit the merit of the work of so unacademical a painter as Goya. Goya could also count on the good offices of another influential member of the academic circle, his brother-in-law, Francisco Bayeu. Too little is known of his marriage with Josefa, Bayeu's sister, to enable us to tell whether it was a love match or not. It is not easy to reconcile the popular view of Goya as a passionate, headstrong and heartstrong revolutionary with the notion of a *mariage de convenance*; but this view has always omitted to take account of another equally prominent side of Goya's nature, that shrewd, practical, calculating temper of the peasant. It is impossible to review the course of his life without coming to the conclusion that there was more of Sancho Panza than of Don Quixote in his composition. The face of the pallid Josefa, as we see it in his portrait in the Prado, acerb, dumb, reproachful, with her large troubled eyes, her wasted cheeks, her bitter, tight-shut mouth, is assuredly not one likely to have captivated the painter of *La Maja Desnuda*. I am inclined to believe that Goya realised quite consciously that the hand of the sister of the eminent court painter could bestow advantages solid enough to compensate for the renunciation of

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more exciting charms, which, as a matter of fact, he never made any serious effort to renounce at all.

In 1776, a year after his return from Rome, Goya received a commission to execute a series of cartoons for the tapestries which were about to be woven for the dining hall and bed-chamber of the King's son, the Príncipe de Asturias, in the palace of El Pardo. Between the years 1776 and 1791 Goya painted forty-five designs for the Fábrica de Tapices de Santa Bárbara, of which thirty-seven are now preserved in the Prado—the remainder having gone astray in the way in which things are wont to do in Spain. For the complete set he received in all some two hundred thousand reals. Upon these cartoons he founded his reputation. They drew upon him the regard of the King and the Court. Goya had no obscure period of apprenticeship to pass through. He passed almost at a single bound from the obscurity of a desultory art student in Rome to the notoriety of a fashionable painter in Madrid.

I wonder what your first impression will be when you stand before this series of spreading canvases. Not impossibly one of disappointment. You may pronounce the colouring to be crude and inharmonious, the tones lacking in subtlety, the figures flat like silhouettes, the quality of the paint uninteresting, the general effect not unlike that of scenic decoration. But before pronouncing

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a verdict recall again the intention of the work. These are not primarily pictures, they are cartoons for tapestries. A closer study of them, taking account of their chronological order, will reveal the fact that Goya deliberately adapted himself to the conditions of the undertaking.

At the outset he did not fully realise the nature of the work that was demanded of him. The first two designs which he produced, "La Merienda" (The Picnic on the Banks of the Manzanares), and "El Baile" (The Dance near San Antonio de la Florida), are painted without any regard for the subsequent process of reproduction on the loom. They are full of elaborate incident and detail, the tones carefully graduated, the figures rendered with a realistic suggestion of solidity. The officials at the factory of Santa Bárbara protested against the difficulty of reproducing them. They complained that Goya's figures were "dandies and flashy wenches so tricked out with coifs, ribands, fal-lals, gauzes, trimmings and other trifles that much time and patience were wasted on them with little or no result." Another of his earlier pictures, "El Ciego Tocando La Guitarro" (The Blind Guitar Player) was actually returned to him with a request that he should simplify its intricacies. This Goya did, minimising the half-tones, accentuating the colours, and surrounding the figures with a faint white outline, which is still visible, so as to facilitate the process of copying.

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This incident must also be taken, I think, as qualifying the accepted notion of Goya's character as that of an implacable, self-willed, arbitrary genius, brooking no outside direction or interference. That he should have been irritated at this hampering restriction was only natural—every artist resents dictation as to how he shall pursue his work—but his annoyance did not prevent him from submitting to it, just as he submitted, after protest, to the prudish objections of the Chapter at Zaragoza. The artist might revolt, but the peasant was determined not to lose his job and his pay.

In the later cartoons, therefore, a marked change of manner is noticeable. They become simpler and more purely decorative in design. The colours are put on in broad flat washes, without gradations of tone. The landscape is simplified; the middle distance disappears; a merely scenic suggestion of trees takes the place of studied foliage; all attempt at spatial composition is abandoned and the effect of depth is secured by the contrast of bright foreground groups against a dim vapoury distance. Consequently the figures gain a curious sharpness, like that of silhouettes—they no longer move in the landscape but stand outside it, like actors on the stage in front of a drop-scene. All these modifications were directly caused by the practical exigency of translating the designs into the woven fabric.

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I cannot help thinking that these conditions under which he laboured, recurring as they did through a period of fifteen years, were not without a permanent influence on Goya's work. He was constrained to ignore background—that is to say, landscape and the problem of a succession of receding planes—to concentrate on figures in motion ; to repress detail ; to gain his effects by sudden contrast. Unquestionably there linger in his later work certain scenic and graphic qualities, an occasional flatness and insolidity of form, a tendency towards the silhouette, a disregard and impatience of accessories which led him to substitute for accurately observed trees, clouds and draperies, conventional decorative symbols. Certainly the contrast between his later works and his earlier cartoons, in particular "La Merienda" and "El Baile," heavy, sombre, substantial, intricate, seems to presuppose not merely the natural evolution of the artist's style but a positive deflecting influence.

The effect which these pictures produce upon the spectator is also modified by another condition over which the artist had no control, that of an unduly exaggerated scale. Each tapestry was destined to fill a given wall-space in the Pardo palace, and the cartoons were required to be of corresponding dimensions. The record of a slight impression is most effective when expressed within narrow limits ; if it be enlarged beyond

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its proper proportions the result is invariably an emphasis of any inherent weakness in the design, and if this be corrected by an added balance and composition, the sharp accent of life is thereby diminished. When unhampered by external conditions, Goya painted his genre pictures on a reduced scale—witness “The Carnival,” “The Madhouse,” “The Inquisition,” in the Academia de Bellas Artes in Madrid. Moreover, in general, Goya lacked the deliberation, patience and power of prolonged and equal effort which is necessary in order to carry out successfully a work of art on a grand scale. He inherited to the full that peculiar temperament of his race which is capable of exercising its energy in sudden concentrated outbursts, but lacks the habit of even, unremitting labour. He was the creature and not the master of his moods. When he was in thrall to the spell of life his power of expression seemed almost to burst the bonds of the limitations of art; but when the magic spell was broken his inward resources failed him, his hand became flaccid and nerveless and he hurried his work to a conclusion with an unconcealed disgust. This quick ebb and flow of interest unfitted him to embark upon a vast undertaking.

His collapse is most marked in his largest design, “El Agosto,” which covers about seventy-five square feet of canvas. In some summer excursion into the country he had stopped to watch the

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midday repose of harvesters—the gaiety of the children standing in the cart and the foolish exuberance of the labourers who had slaked their thirst too well gave him his theme. He set to work on his titanic canvas with his customary enthusiasm, scarcely pausing, we may infer, to consider the composition. While the impression of the scene was still sharp he painted the group of wine-bemused harvesters and the boys busy piling the sheaves on the cart, with the directness of things seen and felt. Then his interest seems to have flagged. Before the picture was far advanced the corn harvest was over, the vintage season had arrived, and an incident for another picture, “La Vendimia,” the grape harvest, now claimed his interest. Accordingly he filled in the vast uncovered spaces of “El Agosto” in the most perfunctory manner, balancing the group of harvesters with a couple of lamentable horses, ill drawn and painted hastily from memory, and improvising a sketchy and meaningless background.

In these cartoons the popular life of Madrid in the last quarter of the eighteenth century flashes before us. Probably no man of his time, with the exception of the playwright, Ramon de la Cruz, knew that life so comprehensively and intimately as Francisco Goya. He moved in all circles, from that of the Court down to that of the bull-ring. With him curiosity about life amounted to a passion. It was the mainspring of his art. And his

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situation was such that he could readily gratify it. He had only to put on his hat and go out into the street in order to find subjects ready composed. He takes a stroll down the Paseo de la Florida by the banks of the Manzanares and sees merry parties picnicking under the trees and dancing by the riverside, and groups of washerwomen resting and at work. He walks in the opposite direction, in the Prado, and we have an amazing presentation of that peculiarly sombre Spanish gallantry of the period—the gallants enwrapped in voluminous cloaks, at the bottom of which emerges the point of a scabbard and at the top a pair of glowering eyes, the *majas* flashy, provocative, relishing the element of danger in the game, the atmosphere not one of laughter and gaiety but of smouldering passion, and in it all a presentiment of the quick gleam of sword-blades and the flow of blood. He passes by the door of the inn and sees the peasants fiercely quarrelling over their game of cards. He goes to the fair and notes the fruit-sellers, the cheap crockery spread out on the ground, the fashionable ladies and gentlemen amusedly contemplating the scene, the chariots of the aristocracy with their immense back wheels like the wheels of carts, the blind guitar player in the midst of a curious crowd. He is present in the bull-ring and at games of *pelota*. A workman falls from a scaffolding and he watches him carried off, limp and drooping, in

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the arms of his mates. It is winter and he marks the crouching, huddled gesture of the peasants plodding over the snow in the face of the blast. And everywhere there are children, playing at soldiers, climbing trees, blowing bladders, watching stilt-walkers. He was a true impressionist in the broader sense of the term, one for whom the business of art was not the creation of deliberate, formal and sifted beauty, but the record of the haphazard impressions of everyday life.

We must not leave the cartoons without a word about costume. I suppose that it is from these tapestry designs that the popular notion of Goya as primarily a painter of quaint carnivalesque costume chiefly derives. Without doubt they are capable of furnishing out a complete wardrobe for a whole company of revellers at a fancy dress ball. But dress has an interest for the historian and even for the philosopher as well as for the masquerader. The unspeakable significance of clothes has already been pretty comprehensively dealt with ; and yet had Teufelsdröckh visited the Prado he would have found abundant material for a supplementary chapter. It may be doubted whether clothes ever acquired such a deep interior significance as in Madrid during the second half of the eighteenth century. They were even responsible for a revolution. What a bitter misfortune for Carlyle that this suggestive sartorial incident escaped him !

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It came about on this wise. Charles III. was one of those reforming busybody monarchs with socialistic notions—"benevolent despots," I believe is the technical term for them—who attempted to tidy up Europe in the two or three decades before the French Revolution, as an ingenious gentleman might lay out an ornamental garden on the slopes of a sleeping volcano. In the manner of benevolent despots he regarded his faithful subjects as a pack of ill-behaved children who did not know what was good for them. They did not even know how to dress themselves with propriety. They muffled themselves up to the eyes in cloaks that reached to their heels and covered their heads with hats of outrageous brims, as though they were playing the part of villains in melodrama. As a matter of fact, the voluminous cloak did actually lend itself to a certain amount of villainy, conveniently screening a complete arsenal of lethal weapons, while the broad-brimmed sombrero, well pulled down over the eyes, assisted the villain to escape recognition. The intermeddling monarch, therefore, decreed that the cloaks must be curtailed and the sombreros clipped of their brims. Little did he guess the depth of the Madrileños' passionate attachment to these insignia of nationality, which they wore like a vesture not only for their bodies but for their very souls. Madrid rose in its wrath, massacred the royal guards and pillaged the

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capital. The King fled and was not allowed to return before he had given his word that no desecrating scissors should ever mutilate the sacred cloak.

Charles III., however, was obsessed by this question of costume. He pondered over the subject for twenty years and at last hit upon the bright, progressive idea of imposing upon his people a compulsory national uniform. There was to be a public competition, and a prize of a thousand reals for the designer who should devise the most suitable costume. This was a form of despotic benevolence which so individualistic a people as the Spanish could hardly be expected to appreciate. However, before Charles could enforce his project, death matured a counter-project of its own and removed the ingenious monarch from a world with such an irrational prejudice against being compulsorily reformed.

But it was something more than a mere prejudice that made the Madrileños cling so passionately to their cloaks and sombreros. The costume had a definite political significance. In the latter half of the eighteenth century Spain was a house divided against itself. On the one hand was the national party, holding fast to the old Iberian traditions, to everything that is implied by the word *casticismo*, the purity of the spiritual breed. On the other was the Gallicising party, watching with fervent hope the new light that was rising

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over the Pyrenees, the first rays of the *éclaircissement*, which emanated from Ferney, the home of Voltaire. This antagonism of ideas expressed itself in dress. Those who borrowed the latest French fashions of thought had their clothes cut according to the latest modes of Paris—much in the same way, I suppose, that our friend Don Román Fabra of Barcelona uttered his political creed in the bright hue of his trousers and the democratic cut of his jacket. And the more widely the enlightenment shed its rationalistic radiance over the peninsula, the more defiantly the Spanish Nationalist struck his sombrero on his head and the more sullenly obliterated himself within the folds of his traditional *capa*.

Both habits are abundantly illustrated in Goya's cartoons. The French costume is worn principally by the official personages and the *petimetres* who emulated the *incroyables* of Versailles. The traditional Spanish fashion is well seen in all its sombre dignity in the glowering *majos* in "Un Paseo de Andalucia" and in the cloaked spectators watching the stilt-walkers. A gayer and more pleasing variant of the national dress is that worn by the young *caballero* in "La Vendimia" (The Vintage), the breeches slashed with ribbons at the knee, the short jacket turned back on the breast to display a loose cravat, the long hair caught up in a net. Pause for a moment at this picture to note the intimate serenity of the scene. Soon we

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shall be confronted with the bitterer and more violent manifestations of Goya's spirit. Here it floats tranquilly in a halcyon calm. The years during which he painted these tapestry cartoons were, I am inclined to think, the happiest of his life. He was in the first blush of fame; his bodily vigour was still undiminished—his great affliction—total loss of hearing—had not yet befallen him; and his mind had not yet been harrowed by the horrors of the war. Life was sweet—perhaps never sweeter than on this sunny autumn afternoon when he went out into the country and saw this gay young *caballero* in his vineyard pleasantly reassuring himself of the success of the new season's vintage.

After all, I believe we made a mistake in taking that preliminary saunter down the long gallery of the Prado. At all events, since I think we should in any case have had to pass through it in order to reach this basement region, we ought to have kept our eyes on the ground as we walked. To come to these cartoons with the mind crowded with memories of El Greco, Ribera, Murillo and Velasquez is to prejudice our judgment and to falsify our perspective. It is as if one should attempt to do justice to a light sparkling hock with the lingering flavour of a mellow port in one's mouth. It would have been better if, before descending this flight of steps, we had just been to

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see the decorative painting on the walls of the royal palaces of Madrid and Aranjuez. Then we should have felt the full shock of the innovation of Goya's achievement.

For consider for a moment what had been the character of the painting produced in Spain in the generation or two before Goya appeared upon the eighteenth-century scene. One recalls the names of Giordano, Van Loo, Tiepolo, Mengs — all foreigners, or, to be more precise, cosmopolitans. It was all one to Mengs whether he painted in Rome, Dresden or Madrid. Why not ?—for, so long as he had the formulas of Raphael, Correggio and Titian well in his head, he could shut his eyes to local colour. The art of the period was distinguished by its note of cosmopolitanism. It was equally at home among all the courts of Europe. It disdained the limitations of nationality. Its commerce was with “ the sublime ” ; its subjects were the heroes and divinities of a remote classical world. It spoke only in dead languages ; abhorred the vernacular. But it was only really at its ease in a court—it was an art for princes and their satellites, like grand opera. It had never heard—at all events it pretended never to have heard—of a fact of not inconsiderable importance at all times, the Common People. Or rather it invented a fictitious people, one that would not shock the fastidious taste of the Court, but amuse it with a kind of quaintness and drollery, just as the courts

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of an earlier age had been amused with the antics of dwarfs and half-witted buffoons. There were no peasants, half-starved, ill-clad, blackened by exposure to the sun, brutalised by a life of unending toil¹ There were only swains and shepherdesses, perennially young, whose sole occupation was to entertain the skipping lambs with melodies upon a rural pipe. They did not inhabit a country of miry fields and dreary skies, but a pastoral landscape where spring was, bright, rainless and perpetual. Sometimes this courtly art did indeed condescend to depict a "boor," but that was just for the sake of introducing a little comic relief; for a boor, as everybody knew, was always an amusing, jovial person who passed his days swilling in the alehouse and catching buxom wenches round the waist. In a word, art was shut up in a palace, busy telling pretty fairy tales and mythical romances to ladies and gentlemen who had lost the sense of actuality; it never even came to the windows to peep out and spy upon a world of crude and vulgar realities.

A notable apparition in this palace was Francisco Goya, the peasant's son of Fuendetodos. But though a plebeian he was by no means a boor; a son of the people, but not a gauche revolutionary.

¹ In this connection it is interesting to note a passage in one of Van Gogh's letters: "To render 'the peasant form at work' is the peculiar feature, the very heart of modern art, and that is something which was done neither by the Renaissance painters, nor the old Dutch masters, nor by the Greeks."

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The Aragonese have in their composition something of the canniness of the Scot. Goya knew what was wanted of him and he made it his business to give satisfaction. Gaiety was wanted and easy grace and superficial charm. He gave all this, and he gave something more—he gave life and reality. He painted not ribanded shepherdesses, but Manzanares washerwomen ; not piping swains, but drunken harvesters, and these not genial and comfortable, like Velasquez's "Borrachos," but sodden, mean, semi-savage. His boors at the alehouse door are not amusing ; they quarrel viciously—you can hear the oaths. His lovers are not gay and gallant, as in Watteau's pastorals, but sombre, jealous, with a hand upon the sword-hilt, as he had seen them in the Salon del Prado. And the common people are sometimes maimed by a fall from a scaffold.

Above all, Goya brought art from the clouds where it lolled with the sublime Olympians down to earth, and not merely to earth, but to Spain, to the banks of the Manzanares and the slopes of the Guadarrama. He not merely humanised it, but nationalised it. He replanted it in the native soil where it had struck roots and sucked up a vital sap in the days of Ribera and Murillo and Velasquez. I do not think that Spanish painting will ever again sell its birthright, even though there are Mengses to-day who would tempt it with a mess of cosmopolitan pottage. From those

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twice forty years of wandering in the wilderness that intervened between Velasquez and Goya, it has learnt by bitter experience the barrenness of an abstracted and classical art, cut adrift from nationality, without a local habitation and a name. Miguel de Unamuno only repeats the wisdom of Goya when he counsels the artists of Spain to-day to "seek the universal in the heart of the local and the particular, in the heart of the temporal and fugitive, the eternal."

IX

THE PORTRAITS

SPAIN is a country of pungent personalities ; it should, therefore, be the paradise of the portrait painter. (I regret that I cannot avoid, precise and pedantic reader, the aggressive alliteration of that sentence. I have challenged every word in it and not one will consent to be removed.) Miguel de Unamuno, were he revising my proofs, would, I know, insist on altering "personalities" to "individualities," for he holds strong and definite convictions upon the gulf that lies between the meanings of these two words, which I confess I had always taken, if not for twins, at all events for very close blood relations. Indeed I am not sure even now, after attending patiently to his elucidations, that I have very clearly grasped the distinction.

It appears, however, that this distinction is essential to a right understanding of the psychology of the Spaniard. For, so the Rector of the University of Salamanca maintains, if I have succeeded in interpreting him aright, the Spaniard combines a strongly marked individuality with an insufficiently developed personality. To assist

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my slow comprehension Don Miguel presented me with the metaphor of a crab (*cangrejo*), a creature which has evolved an impenetrable, armoured exterior to encase a somewhat amorphous and slushy inside. The Spaniard, according to this theory, is crab-like. He is intensely individualistic, acutely conscious of his own separate and distinct existence; holds fast to every characteristic that distinguishes him from his fellow-man; is unwilling, perhaps even unable, to merge himself in the being or the emotions or the ideas of others; elbows his way through the world in a *noli-metangere* fashion; erects a barrier round his soul—the very cloak in which he wraps himself is symbolical of his attitude of isolation and detachment from the outer world. And yet within this hard-cased individuality resides a personality that is poor in content. He is self-contained, but the self which he contains is a meagre one. Spiritually he is a Montenegrin—one who inhabits a barren country but fights passionately for its independence.

It is possible to go further and to maintain that it is the very stubbornness of the Spaniard's individuality that causes the impoverishment of the personality. How can he be rich interiorly when his protectionist policy leads him to hold up all alien imports at the frontier of his ego? His unreceptiveness and hostility to foreign ideas precludes the possibility of any rich diversification

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within. His intellectual soil is poor for want of irrigation ; the atmosphere of his soul dry and dusty because he has kept its windows too long closed. Those who lay the iniquities of the Spanish Inquisition at the door of the Church would do well to remember that the Inquisition in Spain was a popular institution, by no means uncongenial to the temper of the people. For what is heresy but newness and strangeness of thought ? This intrusion of a disintegrating element the Spaniard resented and combated with the sharp sword of the Inquisition. He wished to preserve the purity of the spiritual breed, the integrity of the national individuality.

Perhaps you are wondering where this digression upon Spanish psychology is going to lead me. I had hoped that it would lead me back to Goya, but I confess that he is not within sight at present. I cannot help a certain feeling of uneasiness when I lose sight of my hero for long. (Yes, I have been very uneasy whilst writing many of these notes ! I am always imagining that you want to hear only about him, whereas I am always trying to interest you in something else. I have a suspicion that you are really more interested in Goya than I am. I fear you will blame me for bringing you to Spain on false pretences.— Close this parenthesis immediately ? Thank you.)

From the portrait painter's point of view it may be that this distinction between individuality

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and personality is not vital, for it is an interior distinction, and the painter is concerned, primarily, with the outside. This outside, this kind of individuality, is more striking and vivid in the Spaniard than in any other race of Europeans that I know. It seems to me that our modern civilisation has an obliterating effect upon the features. People who have been turned out wholesale by the same educational machine, like so many gross of pins, who are nourished by the same halfpenny Press, who are recreated by the films of the same picture palaces, who live in rows of houses and villas built by the same jerry-builder, can hardly be expected to differ very sharply from one another facially when they resemble one another in nearly every other respect. The features tend to become blurred like those of a composite photograph that strikes the average of a score of different faces. Men begin to assume a general look of indistinction. In an older country such as Spain, and by "older" I mean one that still stands for the most part high and dry above the rising tide of "progress," it is just the note of personal distinction that is most remarkable in the faces of the people. What Stevenson said of Raeburn's portraits is equally true of them—"compared with the sort of living people one sees about the streets, they are as bright new sovereigns to fishy and obliterated sixpences."

This sharp impression, as of a freshly minted

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coin, is also the most forcible characteristic of the men and women whom Goya painted. Whether their faces gave the lie to their souls and their inner personality was lacking in emphasis, it is impossible in most cases now to determine ; but the originality and rigour of their external individuality is unmistakable. They were essentially paintable people. Their faces are like lamps in which the bright flame of vitality burns keenly.

This fact suggests an interesting speculation which, were I possessed of adequate knowledge, I should like to discuss at length—the question as to how far the personality of the painter is capable of reacting upon and stimulating the personality of the sitter. Anyone who has ever sat for his portrait, even if only at the photographer's, must have been aware of experiencing a unique and uneasy sensation. There is first that surprising realisation of possessing a face, a possession which, curiously enough, one is seldom conscious of in everyday life. But still more disconcerting is the sudden challenge of [the portraitist demanding the delivery not merely of your money (that only incidentally of course), but also of your life, your inner life, the personality which is your own private secret. The interrogation of the camera is so sudden and tactless that one is rarely ready with the answer in time, and hence results, I suppose, the fact that the photograph so seldom reveals a personality,

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but merely an expression of startled surprise or of blank mask-like nullity. I have a notion that a good deal of the portrait painter's success, apart altogether from his manual skill, depends upon his magnetic power of drawing the shy secret personality, the subconscious self, if you like, from its inner recesses to the surface of the features. I don't mean that he merely observes and records the character that is already plainly chronicled on the face for all the world to see, but that he actually summons the hidden self from its hiding-place and compels it to come forth, naked, to the light of day.

As there are already so many digressions in this book, and those of a personal kind, to apologise for another would be merely to affect a formality, which after all might be a little out of place on so informal a pilgrimage. It is about a portrait of myself. I once had my head drawn by a young artist whose name it would perhaps be indiscreet to mention. I had never met him before. He was one of those who prefer to work in silence—at all events he made no response to my offers of conversation. We confronted one another eye to eye, with something of that silent, motionless and tense alertness, so it seemed to me, which usually marks the encounter of two strange and interrogatory dogs. By degrees I felt growing up within me an uncontrollable resentment of this slow, persistent, ruthless inquisition. I was not dis-

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mayed at his taking possession of the outworks of my individuality, the merely structural and uninforming features, but when he implacably pursued his assault to the very innermost citadel, involuntarily I endeavoured to strengthen my defences, at all hazards to screen my private self, passionately determining not to be sacked and looted even in my secret chambers. The resentment sharpened into positive hatred. I bristled with a quite unreasoning and canine hostility. There was a palpable antagonism between us. When at last the drawing was completed I saw that I had suffered defeat. There in black and white every undesirable quality in my nature was stated with minute and cruel precision, every secret that I could have wished to conceal had been haled forth and put on public view, and with a kind of final, insolent flourish the artist had even published that very hostility, so bitter yet so unavailing, which he himself had evoked and triumphed over. It was not so much a portrait as a record of the clash of wills. By means of some unaccountable magic he had expelled the Jekyll and aroused the Hyde in me; he had painted, not a compromise of the two, such as artists are wont to paint, but unadulterated Hyde. There are some among my friends who have told me, perhaps with a fine disregard of that candour which is so disintegrating to friendship, that they cannot recognise me in the drawing at

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all. But, unhappily for my peace of soul, I can recognise myself in it only too well.

Doubtless, it was in the light of this experience that I read many of Goya's portraits; and—perhaps you will say that it was only guesswork—I could not resist the conclusion that he too had a keen eye for the more sinister qualities in a man's character and, what is more, a certain malicious glee in dragging them from their lurking-places and exposing them upon the canvas. Look at that portrait of brother-in-law Bayeu here in the Prado. An exquisite harmony of silver-greys, a trifle gayer and shriller than Velasquez would have allowed himself, you may say, but a thing of sheer beauty—it is all that and something more. True, when it was painted the brothers-in-law were on more friendly terms than in the old days at Zaragoza—for had not Bayeu been instrumental in securing for Goya the commission for the tapestries?—and yet it does not require a very discerning eye to detect, if not a malicious, at least a mischievous, intention in Goya's brush. The narrow, scanning eyes, the puckered brow, the austere drooping mouth, the precisely frizzed hair,—how deliberately the cumulative effect is designed to hint at the narrow, pedantic, conventional mind. The painter has underlined with just a nuance of contempt the academician in Bayeu. I fancy it is his retaliation for that tactless resolution of the Chapter of El Pilar

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recommending him to be grateful to his brother-in-law !

Not unlike in composition and colour scheme is the portrait of Doctor Peral in the National Gallery. I know nothing whatever about the private life of this gentleman, but Goya has taken care that we shall not fail to catch his sinister aspect. He seems even to have leapt upon it, like a beast of prey upon his victim, with a kind of brutal rapture. How ruthlessly he fastens upon that crooked mouth, those eyes that strike you cold ! I recollect too that full-length portrait of the Duke of San Carlos which I saw at the offices of the Canal Imperial at Zaragoza. A very active, intelligent and business-like nobleman to the best of my knowledge, but Goya has rather spitefully made a mock of his dignity, giving him a dandiacal strut, a laughable air of self-conscious importance, and that touch of the manikin which makes the whole world of Goya's genteel sitters kin.¹

It must have demanded no slight degree of

¹ In emphasising what appears to me to be a satirical element in this portrait, I am not forgetful of its marvellous pictorial qualities. It is one of the most entirely admirable of Goya's portraits, both in its technique and its air of breathing life. I fear it caused the work of the British Vice-Consulate at Zaragoza to be suspended for a whole morning, for Don Larripa Gill and his friends, in whose company I went to see it, lost all regard of time and the importance of national destinies in their immeasurable enthusiasm. A more competent critic, Eduardo Rosales, after examining the painting of the face, is reported to have exclaimed, " My friend, such painting will never be seen again."

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courage in a churchman to take his stand before Goya's easel. He had a priest for his brother and helped him to a chaplaincy, and a priest for his best friend and first benefactor, Father Felix Salzedo; yet no man ever exclaimed with a bitterer ring of conviction than Goya, "Le cléricalisme, voila l'ennemi!" If he ever suffered ill-usage from a bullying *cura* at Fuendetodos he took an excessive revenge upon the cloth in his portraits. When painting a churchman he always mixed his paint with gall. All the evil that has ever been spoken of the much-abused Society of Jesus seems comparatively scatheless beside his portrait of Father Antonio Llorente, the learned historian of the Inquisition, whose countenance is a pungent epitome of the legendary astuteness and smiling inhumanity of the Jesuit. "That one may smile and smile and be a villain," is the painter's comment. Even more terrible in its unsparing denunciation is his rendering of the dark hypocrisy and domineering arrogance of the president of the Inquisition, Canon Ramon Pignatelli, who, if Casanova's scandalous gossip can be believed, was not undeserving of his place in Goya's pillory.¹

¹ "J'eus aussi occasion de connaître le chanoine Pignatelli, d'origine italienne, vénérable président de l'Inquisition, qui, tous les matins faisait mettre en prison la pourvoyeuse qui lui avait fourni la fille qui avait soupé et couché avec lui. C'était pour lui faire faire pénitence de lui avoir fourni le moyen de commettre un péché."

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But Goya was impartial in his censorship. He lashed no one more cruelly than Urquijo, the fiercely anti-clerical Secretary of State. There is at any rate more of the man in the full-blooded Pignatelli than in this sly, incompetent, mean-hearted creature who wormed his way into office by sycophancy, who doted on Tom Paine's "Age of Reason," and received from Napoleon, without winking, the gift of a Bible! Nor was Goya kinder to the military habit. Never, except in his own etchings, has the ferocity engendered by the trade of killing been revealed in starker nakedness than in his portrait of General Juan Martin.

But it would be wearisome and profitless to go through the whole range of Goya's portraiture taking note of his lynx eye for the weaker side of human nature. (Of an example supposed to be the most audacious of all, his treatment of the Queen, I shall have occasion to speak presently.) Just as Ribera delighted to depict the physical dishonour of man Goya delights to hint at the ignobility of his soul. He knew not the meaning of hero-worship and was incapable of painting a halo. In almost all his portraits there is something disparaging, belittling, derogatory. In such terms might Swift have painted his contemporaries had he been the portraitist of his age. Hogarth affords but a partial parallel. He too was a satirist in paint, but his satires were for the most part the

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pictorial illustrations of the awful examples of the popular preacher. He dealt in the stock-in-trade of the satirist—vice, vanity, avarice, chicanery, sloth. And in portraiture he was more than equitable, he was generous. A man who could regard the common stuff of humanity with the genial, tolerant, humorous sympathy that smiles from the canvas on which he has painted the heads of his servants, must verily have had a fair share of the milk of human kindness in him. Goya was less a satirist than a mocker. Standing before his portraits we seem to overhear not the moral intonation of the preacher, but the sneer of some satanic critic, cheapening the merits of the Great Artist's overrated masterpiece, *Man*. Often he seems to stray upon the verge of caricature, but never trespasses over the boundary line. For caricature consists in a gross exaggeration of the truth. I do not think Goya ever consciously exaggerated. His satire is telling because it is truth-telling. But it does not tell the whole truth—it omits the extenuating circumstances, it suppresses the redeeming graces. In striking the balance of a man's character he invariably underwrote the items on the credit side.

It may be that this bitter cynical temper is less individual than racial; Iberian, or at any rate Aragonese, and springs from some strain in the blood. The hypothesis is perhaps one which only he who is equipped with a wide and deep-reaching

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knowledge of the Peninsula and its people should venture to put forward. It haunts me, although I confess I cannot adduce much evidence in its support. This same contemptuous quality does not plainly appear in any other Spanish painter. Ribera painted a kind of lacerated humanity, but without ever assailing spiritual dignity. Velasquez gave elegance and distinction even to his beggars and buffoons ; his palette was a fount of honour from which every sitter derived a patent of nobility—but, as I have said before, Velasquez seems to me always to oppose the main stream of Spanish tendencies. In the literature and in the character of the people, however, we are continually aware of a certain harsh and brutal outlook upon men and things, a materialistic scepticism, a doubt or even a denial of the high graces and grandeurs of the spirit, a kind of realism run amuck ; a quality which we may call, in a word, Sancho-Panzaism. You may say that this temper is merely the temper of the peasant all over Europe, and is to be found in Yorkshire and Normandy as well as in Castille and Aragon. But I think that nowhere does it demand so unrestrained and savage an expression as in Spain. Nowhere have I heard the note of disparagement sounded with such a bitter vehemence as among popular Spanish audiences. I remember once——

But I must begin a new paragraph. I regret to find myself embarked upon a considerable digres-

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sion.—I remember that one night (or to be quite truthful, several nights) I amused my leisure, as Dr Johnson would put it, by visiting the Teatro Madrileño. The theatre is not, as its name might be supposed to imply, the principal theatre in Madrid ; it is situated in the somewhat unfashionable Calle de Toledo, and the price of a stall in the front row is one peseta. They detain you, in the manner of Continental railway companies, in a little bare waiting-room before allowing you into the hall, with the object of inducing you to partake in a series of petty lotteries of about a minute's duration each, the tickets being of the value of a halfpenny, and the prize, a tiny bottle of villainous viridian liqueur, I suppose rather less. But I am not digressing merely in order to indicate the ubiquity of the lottery system. For me, the main interest of this little theatre lay not even in the performers but in the audience. I do not wish to disparage the performers. They were of course all dancers (happily the taste for " knock-about " and " back-chat " artists is still undeveloped in the more popular Spanish music halls), and their dancing was as good as you are likely to see in Madrid, although that qualification, I admit, comes perilously near to damning with faint praise. But I had not been there long before I was forced to conclude that the audience had not come to applaud good dancing—they were unmistakably happier when they were loudly

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censuring bad. And yet the dancing was not wholly bad ; some of it had the rare and very delightful charm of immaturity.

I remember one child who came on the stage—I suppose she was midway in her teens—a willowy slip of a girl, dressed in the familiar short jacket and baggy trousers closely fitted to the hips. I guessed that it was her first appearance. She went through all the conventional movements with a most deliciously unconventional grace. She twisted her long, lithe body into the desired contortions ; she stamped with resonant heels ; she made the most harmlessly fierce grimaces. And all the time she laughed, with clear, girlish laughter, at her own incompetence. Yet it was an incompetence far more gracious than the precise perfection of the practised ballerina. The rhythm of youth was in every line of her body. All her motions had the happy zest of irresponsible, glad, natural things, lambs and butterflies and little children. She seemed to bring into this alien slum the freshness of uncorrupted places, the mood of bright May mornings and tossing blossoms and running water. I thought too that she must surely bring a smile to every heart, for her own smile was so gay, irrepressible, infectious, disarming. But it did not avail to disarm the hostility of this censorious audience. They watched her for a moment or two in chilly silence, then growled disapprovingly, then burst into a

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frenzy of jeers, hoots, cat-calls. They told her their opinion of her with crude precision. "*Fuera!*" (Outside!) "*Que no vuelva!*" (And don't come back again!) Amidst a tempest of insults the inspired child, smiling tearfully now, fluttered into the wings.

Perhaps you don't think much of the incident. But if you had been sitting there in the stalls I am sure you would have been aware of a calculated stinging and brutal opposition that would have shocked you, had you been accustomed only to the tepid disfavour of an English audience. It was not simple candour, nor yet was it mere unthinking heartlessness; there was a palpable relish in it, the screaming joy of a pack in full cry. It was plain that the spectators needed, to complete their happiness, the anguish of a hunted creature. And it was the same with all the other performers. Each came forward to the dingy foot-lights with an undisguised desire to please. But the spectators' pleasure was in their failure. Good, bad and indifferent, young and autumnal, artless and provocative, all had to submit to their baiting, to receive the chastisement of their well-meaning imperfections, to stand as a target for ragged satire, and finally to retire, with what wounded grace was left to them, before a salvo of "*Fueras*" and "*Que no vuelvas.*" And when the curtain dropped for the last time, the audience rose with faces bright with satisfaction, like a company of

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sportsmen at the close of a day on which they have dealt out death with liberal and unfaltering hand.

This same popular characteristic—the quick eye for a weakness and the unsparing manifestation of contempt—is a common phenomenon of the bull-ring. I am convinced that a perfect exhibition of skill on the part of the *diestro* would not afford the spectators a perfect pleasure. They can be rapturously generous, with the safe and inexpensive generosity of the bull-ring, showering upon their hero hats, sticks and wineskins, which he and his attendants promptly return to their owners. But I think they would consider that they had not quite got their money's worth if they were denied an occasion for that exhilarating howl of execration which follows an unhappy error like the peal of thunder after the lightning flash.

I am afraid we have again strayed rather far from Goya and his portraits. I think that when we last parted company with him I was casting about for some theory that might help to explain his accusatory attitude before his sitters. And I have thought to find a partial explanation in this imperative tendency of the Spanish mind, and above all of the Spanish peasant mind, to mistrust, to scrutinise with suspicion and hostility, to condemn without quarter, and to exult in the condemnation. Again I think it is of significant import that Goya was of peasant stock. His genius

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was like a sudden explosion of the latent passions of the race. Thrown abruptly into a circle of rank and fashion far above that of his origin, and pleased, as undeniably he was, to move in that glittering galaxy, he nevertheless preserved no little portion of the peasant's ingrained suspicion and disdain of the unlabouring rich. I have even been aware, especially in his full-length portraits, of what has seemed to me to be an expression of physical contempt. Possibly this impression may in part be accounted for by the habitual shortness of the figures, in part by his usually perfunctory treatment of the legs, a formula of black knee-breeches and white stockings which rarely give any indication of firm muscle and solid bone within; but no observer can fail to be struck with that air of the puppet and the manikin which he frequently obliges his men to wear. You can see it in the portrait of the Duke of San Carlos, in the cartoons for the tapestries, in the etchings. Goya himself was a man not only of intense vitality but also of great bodily vigour, and in painting the portraits of the lordlings and courtiers who commanded his brush he seems to have indulged his amused contempt for their frail limbs and flaccid muscles.

Miguel de Unamuno has somewhere remarked that any picture by a great painter portrays its author better than those portraits which he paints expressly of himself. Almost invariably all the

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sitters to a great portrait painter, however various and individual their features, will be found to participate in a common family likeness, unobtrusive perhaps but unmistakable by the close observer. This common denominator, this general cast of countenance which the painter has imposed upon his sitters rather than surprised in them, may be trusted to give the index to the painter's own character. It is the reflex of his own temperament. It hints at the qualities which he himself possesses, or at any rate desiderates. It would not be difficult to multiply instances endlessly. It is incredible that all the men whom El Greco painted should have been mystics ; yet in each of their worn pallid faces burns the same keen, dry flame of the spirit. No human beings can have been more unlike than the misbegotten dwarfs and the high-born grandees of the Court of Philip II. ; yet Velasquez gave them equally that reserve and singular distinction the source of which was in his own serenity. Van Dyck provided all his sitters with a pedigree ; Hals's men are recognisable by their gross health and spirits and that incurable tendency to break out into the chorus of " For he's a jolly good fellow," or whatever its Dutch equivalent may be ; Reynolds bestowed upon his ladies and gentlemen alike a liberal measure of his English sanity and candour ; Gainsborough's sitters are compelled to wear his own hue of melancholy, while Lawrence's, on the

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other hand, are startled into a bright and meretricious animation, which doubtless some of them must have been surprised to find that they possessed.

It would seem at first sight that Goya was an exception to the general rule. His numerous progeny disowns a common kinship. The Duke of San Carlos is not on speaking terms with Bayeu ; Canon Pignatelli would cut the rationalist Urquijo dead if they were hung together in the same gallery ; it is difficult to believe that Moratin, the gentle poet, and the fire-eating General Juan Martin could have been denizens of the same planet. The common denominator is lacking. It might be said, if you will pardon me for dragging in these tedious terms, that Goya was an objective rather than a subjective painter. His gaze was searching, inquisitorial, analytic ; he never looked at his sitters through the coloured glasses of sentiment, as his predecessor, Murillo, had done. He furnished them with no credentials of nobility, or dignity, or virtue, to which they could not establish an authentic claim ; gave them no other passport to immortality than the signature of his own brush. He who assigns to men desirable attributes must have a belief in their desirability. Goya had scant belief in anything. His mind was essentially sceptical, iconoclastic. He had a prejudice against human nature, at all events against that section of it which came under his

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observation in Madrid at the close of the eighteenth century. He had the instinct of denigration. It is not surprising, therefore, that his sitters should conform to no general type. Each has to stand on his own merits, or rather on his own demerits.

"To me it has never ceased to be a matter of surprise," Mr William Rothenstein has remarked, pertinently enough, "that, seeing the frankness of his attitude, both as regards his art and his life, all the aristocracy of Spain should have been so eager to sit before him and become possessors of his pictures and his prints." No doubt the ladies and gentlemen could have wished their features to be limned by a more tactful and courtier-like deferential hand. Fashion, however, is a hard taskmaster, and it must not be overlooked that Goya enjoyed the title of Pintor de Cámara and the favour of their Majesties. He seems, moreover, to have had a way with him, this bluff peasant's son of Fuendetodos. His personal conduct was not quite so lacking in tactful deference as his art. And he had at least one superb merit, which not even the most conventional sitter can have failed to appreciate—his portraits were always alive. In many cases I suspect that they were more alive than the living sitter.

It should not be forgotten that Spain, when it sat to Goya for its portrait, had a sluggish pulse. To that fit of extravagant energy which conquered

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the Americas and launched the Armada succeeded a long bedridden period of exhaustion and convalescence. The Counter-Reformation lit a fire in the Spaniard's soul which the eighteenth-century Enlightenment almost extinguished. In one of the essays of José Cadalso, a contemporary of Goya, there is a passage which opens a peephole into the daily life of the average well-to-do Spaniard of the time. "There are in Spain," he says, "many thousands of men who rise very late; drink chocolate, very hot, and water, cold; dress themselves; take a stroll in the plaza; quiz a good-looking girl or two; hear Mass; return to the plaza; acquaint themselves with the latest local slander, and tittle-tattle; return home; eat very slowly; take their siesta; get up again; take a stroll in the country; return home; take a little refreshment; go to an evening party; play a game of cards; return home; pray; sup and go to bed."

An extreme simplification of the art of life, is it not? These leisurely gentlemen were merely amateurs of living. They required a little coaching from an expert in the art, such as Pepys, or Casanova, or Goya himself—men who thought it shame "on this short day of frost and sun to sleep before evening."

Of such human invertebrates a large proportion of the raw material of Goya's canvases consisted. True, he painted the whole "Who's Who" of his

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day—statesmen, soldiers, writers, actors, priests, bull-fighters—all those who did anything or thought anything in the *villa y corte* of Madrid. The elect, however, who did and thought, were but a handful among the thousands who merely strolled in the plazas, returned home, prayed, supped and went to bed, repeating themselves like recurring decimals. But take a glance at the men and women in Goya's portrait gallery.

There is a common denominator after all—vitality, keen, interior, sometimes subterranean almost, but always shining through the veil of the flesh. Every one of them seems to be living where Walter Pater would have us all live, "at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy." However dimly burned the flame of life, however darkly it was screened by habit and convention, Goya had an eye for it. Rather than quench the smoking flax, he fanned it into a blaze. I think no other portrait painter possessed in the same degree as Goya that magic quality, which I spoke of a little while ago, of rousing, stimulating, kindling the personality of his sitters. He summoned the life to their faces as an insult summons the blood. He waked them from their lethargy as with a trumpet blast. He made them share, at least for the moment, his own overflowing and tumultuous vitality.

It would be interesting to compare a portrait by

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Goya with one of the same character by another hand. You can make one such comparison by going to the British Museum and demanding to see his drawing in sanguine of the head of the Duke of Wellington. I no longer marvel that Wellington has never secured that intimate place in the affections of his countrymen which the Mighty Seaman has won. They have never seen him as he really was—assuming that they have never seen that portrait in the British Museum. One's mental image of the Iron Duke seems somehow to be derived from public monuments in provincial towns, where he presides, aloof, austere, glacial, over the din of tramcars and the frothy menaces of socialistic agitators. He is the man with the marble mask, as incapable of quickening sympathy as the Sphinx. But Goya broke through that British reserve, for which, I suppose, more than for the victory of Waterloo, the playing fields of Eton are responsible, and startled the soul into his face. It is an intrepid, exalted, fiery, yet delicately sensitive soul that transforms the marble mask into a mobile face, half that of Irish fighter and half that of a young Greek god. For once Goya has drawn a hero.

There is a fascination in Goya's portraits different from the fascination of those of any other painter, except perhaps of El Greco. And in both cases the fascination springs from the painter's keen perception of a mysterious, flame-like,

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inward vitality. This terrible quality of life was for Goya the mystery of mysteries. He never came to accept it as a fact of stale experience. It was a miracle that renewed itself every time that a human being took his stand before his easel. Hence in all the men and women that he painted there is something elemental and incalculable, something which at the last eludes analysis. They are never limited and circumscribed. Of the sitters of our greatest English portraitists you can usually predicate something certain and definite. You can say that they were country squires, or architects, or bankers, or men of letters, or women of fashion. Goya's sitters were all these and something more. Breeched, flounced, bewigged, bepowdered, trapped in the cage of civilisation, they still remain earth's sons and daughters, and their bright eyes glitter dangerously through the bars of the cage. Even though they are of the chocolate-drinking, plaza-strolling order, yet they have not quite put out the secret flame. Some night, as they return home to pray and sup, the great adventure may befall them. . . .

X

ROYALTY AND THE NUDE

I MUST now request you to retrace your steps to the Sala de Retratos, where we will spend a few moments in the company of Royal Persons. (Am I really acquiring the genteel phraseology of the official guide? One's voice seems to assume a startling volume in these reverberating rooms, and there are so many people standing about who overhear every word one utters, that I do not feel nearly so much at my ease talking to you here as I did outside the café at Barcelona or on the road to Fuendetodos. But I am afraid that I must now try to talk like a historian (or does he call himself *an* historian?), for I don't suppose, unless you have specialised on Spanish history, that you are on very intimate terms with this very dull branch of the Bourbon family.)

Charles IV. succeeded to the throne of Spain on the death of his father on the 14th of December 1788. A rather bodeful date, you will observe, the devil's cauldron of revolution coming to the boil on the other side of the Pyrenees, cousin Louis already a little pale and anxious, and the throne-shattering Corsican now entered upon his

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twentieth year. Foul weather ahead and a great need of a pilot aboard with a firm hand upon the wheel and a clear eye to pierce the gathering darkness. The new monarch had a straight eye for a partridge on the wing, but the dissolving view of international politics, or for that matter of politics of any kind, completely bewildered him. He had none of his father's zeal for reforms—he was indifferent even to the cut of the national costume. The limit of his enlightenment did not reach beyond a mild interest in aeronautics. In fair-weather days he would have made a respectable figurehead. He was sound in limb and conscience, but his wits were dull and his will weak as water. In many respects the Spanish counterpart to the British George III., but unhappily for him he had no Pitt, nor Nelson, nor Wellington, for his lieutenants. He had only the amiable literator Floridablanca, the atheistical libertine Aranda, and the well-meaning but incompetent ex-guardsman Manuel Godoy. The ship of state, pilotless, ill-manned, water-logged with debt, drove helplessly before the storm. At a time when the breakers of the French Revolution were well in sight, the Russian ambassador could laconically report to his Government, "the King is either hunting or amusing himself with balloons, Aranda is occupied with experiments on the value of cork jackets in diving operations." It never seemed to enter into

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anybody's head to think of providing a cork jacket for Spain.

A far more masterful and infinitely more sinister figure is that of the Queen, Maria Luisa of Parma. She belongs to the Messalinas of history, a woman, as it has been aptly said, "who loved men better perhaps than she was loved by them." There are stories of how, when little more than a girl, she used to slip out of the palace at nightfall to seek unsavoury adventures in the streets of Madrid. Her lifelong adventure she owed to the discovery of a handsome young private in the royal guards, Manuel Godoy. With what relish he received her advances we cannot tell, but as his informal position as favourite of the Queen assured to him the more official status of Prime Minister of Spain it is not to be supposed that he hesitated long in accepting it. He it was who for fifteen years virtually controlled the destinies of the nation—so far as a wire-pulled puppet who danced at the bidding of Napoleon can be said to have controlled them. For the most amazing feature of this amazing intrigue was that he contrived to be "dear Manuel" to the King no less than to the Queen. The blind simplicity of the guileless monarch almost exceeded the limits of credibility. If an informant of Blanco-White can be believed, he expressed his views of the marital relations of royal persons in the following terms:—"We, the crowned heads, have this advantage over other

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people—Our honour is safe. For even if queens had the inclination to err like other women, where could they find kings and emperors to share their fault?"¹ In any case it would appear certain that Charles was blind to the scandal which was the common gossip of the whole town and Court of Madrid.

Such were the heads of the royal house, and about them revolved a horde of relations, each of whom was as scantily endowed as the King and Queen themselves with those attributes which are popularly supposed, irrationally enough perhaps, to be the natural inheritance of royal persons. The uninteresting features and conventional uniforms of this exceedingly commonplace family it was Goya's duty, as Pintor de Cámara, to perpetuate in paint. A sufficiently unpromising task in all conscience ! Let us see how he acquitted himself in it.

Here they are, a round dozen of them, all on one immense canvas in a bay of the Sala de Retratos. In the centre stands the Queen, vulgar, domineering, sensual, her head turned in one direction, her eyes in another—a characteristic attitude of hers, suggestive of her crooked nature. One arm encircles the neck of her younger daughter, the other hangs down to take the hand of her six-year-old son, Francisco de Paula.² " If one saw no more of her than this naked, fleshy arm, one would know

¹ Doblado's Letters.

² From this prince the reigning King of Spain is descended.



Photograph : Anderson

THE FAMILY OF CHARLES IV
FROM THE PAINTING IN THE PRADO GALLERY

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enough," an observer has shrewdly remarked.¹ On the right, a little in advance but unobtrusive in his dull brown coat, stands the King, massive but not imposing, rigid but without dignity, a figure not so much of Majesty as of the Heavy Father. On the left of the picture, in the foreground, a shadow falls half across the figure of the Crown Prince, Don Fernando, the future Ferdinand VII., a weak, shifty, passionate, mean-souled youth, of whom however it must be said in extenuation that he had Maria Luisa for his mother. We catch a glimpse of his younger brother peeping round his shoulder, the Infante Don Carlos. And just over his head, in the background, we can descry, dim and discreet, the rugged, earnest features of Francisco Goya himself.

(*Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère ?*)

"A grocer's family who have won the big lottery prize," is the comment of Théophile Gautier. A little less than just, I think, if that be all. At any rate it is a grocer's family *in excelsis*, touched with immortality, transfigured by a perfect beauty. Yes, for I am not sure that this does not appear to me to be the most perfect in beauty and the most masterly in workmanship of all Goya's pictures. As you gaze upon it, the ungainly figures fade away into the limbo proper to grocers' families and nothing remains but a glamour of sunlight and rainbow sheen.

¹ Dr Richard Oertel.

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Consider the problem. Goya's task was twofold—to satisfy his royal patrons by painting a dozen lifelike portraits, and to satisfy his own artistic conscience by producing out of this unpropitious material, without compromising the truth, a thing of sheer beauty. The truth of the portraits is self-evident. With what care he carried out the preliminary studies we know from the nine life-sized heads, each brought to a high degree of finish, some of which hang in the ante-room of the gallery. Something of the amazing vividness of the sketches is lost in the larger composition, but that I suppose was almost inevitable. The arrangement of the figures in a series of parallel vertical lines errs perhaps on the side of stiffness, or it may be that it is purposely designed to emphasise the stiffness and stolidity of a particularly stiff and stolid family. Yet although each figure remains detached and markedly individual in bearing, all are brought together, largely by the skilful management of the shadows at either extremity, into an easy unity of composition.

The desired beauty Goya sought and found in the play of sunlight on the colours of dress and uniform and the facets of stars and jewels. No other of his pictures betrays such a whole-hearted preoccupation with light. It afforded him a way of escape from the unloveliness of the ostensible subject and became the real theme of the picture. It ripples rhythmically over the figures, glancing



Photograph: Anderson

THE INFANTE DON CARLOS, SON OF CHARLES IV
FROM A PRELIMINARY STUDY FOR "THE FAMILY OF CHARLES IV" IN THE PRADO GALLERY

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across the pale blue of Fernando's uniform, bursting with full brilliance on the Queen's white lace skirt, with its fall of silk and exquisite border of gold-and-white embroidery, catching at the jewels in her hair and on her breast, flaming in the shrill scarlet of little Francisco's coat and trousers, lingering upon the watered silk of the King's broad ribbon, and then delightfully losing itself in the transparent shadows of the figures on the left. Goya's reputation as a colourist may rest securely upon this achievement. It marks also his final conquest of the method of impressionism. In simple beauty of paint I think he never surpassed his handling of the draperies of the Queen's robe. There had been nothing like it since Velasquez ; there was to be nothing like it until Manet.

Now why did Goya sign this picture with the signature of his own honest and plebeian features ? A frivolous inquiry ? Not altogether, for it raises another question of considerable interest—namely, what was his real attitude towards the royal house of Spain, and royalty in general ? On this subject there has been a good deal of talk and, in my opinion, of rather foolish talk. There are some who will have it that Goya was an irreconcilable revolutionary, a Robespierre with an easel for a guillotine, whose creed was not art for art's sake, but art for revolution's sake. They see everywhere in Goya's work evidences of a scarcely disguised attack upon established institutions, upon the

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Church and the Crown in particular. His earliest biographer, Yriarte, first gave the legend currency and it has passed so fluently from hand to hand among biographers and critics ever since that it is now generally received with the readiness of accredited fact. The learned German art historian, Richard Muther, gives his solemn sanction to the popular view. "At heart a revolutionary, an anarchist," he writes, "even while painting these royal portraits Goya was writing the most biting pamphlets on the Divine Right of Kings." And again: "In Spain, the most purely monarchical country of Europe, Goya painted portraits which are a satire upon all Monarchy."

Let us examine this charge for a moment. Upon what does it rest? Primarily upon the undisputed fact that the members of the royal family as Goya shows them to us are for the most part very stupid or very unpleasant-looking people. But supposing that is just what in fact they were! Of Charles III. Casanova incidentally remarks: "This King had the physiognomy and the expression of a sheep." In Goya's portrait of him in the Prado he has, at the worst, the expression of a rather intelligent farmer. Maria Luisa's features—the beaked nose, the wide mouth, the cruel, greedy eyes—were commonly likened by her contemporaries to those of a bird of prey. Goya, in one portrait at least, has given her a kind of eagle-like dignity. Maria Josefa, seen in the large portrait group

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peering peevishly behind Don Fernando and his young wife, was so atrociously ugly that she sought for a suitor to her hand in vain, although she was the King's sister. What was the unfortunate Court painter to do if his royal sitters so obstinately refused to look regal?

But Velasquez, it is said,—did not that courtier-painter succeed in bestowing a certain mournful grandeur upon the Hapsburgs, who were scarcely less ill-favoured than the Bourbons? Yes, and upon the least distinguished of their subjects also. But that was not Goya's way. As we have seen, he never gave any of his sitters the benefit of the doubt. He always told the plain unvarnished tale of truth, with perhaps the addition of a private unflattering comment of his own. Did he treat his royal sitters differently from the rank and file? I am inclined to think that he did. It seems to me that he went a little out of his way to make the best of them.

Turn for a moment to that single figure of the Queen hanging opposite the large group. She stands stiffly erect, habited in black, her arm gleaming against her dress in its naked sensuality. A harridan, you exclaim, coarse, brazen, impudent! But is there not also a hint of a firmness of purpose, an implication of capacity, resolution, strength and even dignity in this solitary figure, divested of all the insignia of royalty yet preserving a gesture of command and the bearing of a queen?

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Look also at the equestrian portraits of the King and Queen in the ante-room. There is as little evasion of the truth here as in the family group, but just as in the latter case the painter kindly led the eye away from the harsh reality into private bypaths of beauty of his own devising, so here too he has escaped from bondage to the bare fact by blending horse and rider into a single noble and monumental mass, flung in one tremendous silhouette against a panorama of earth and sky. Or go to the Academia de Bellas Artes and regard the portrait of Ferdinand VII. on horseback. Perhaps a more despicable being never sat upon a throne than this degenerate youth who plotted to dethrone his father, fawned upon Napoleon when his own people were bleeding to death to resist the invader, drove almost every man of worth into exile, and consummated his reign by closing the universities and establishing an academy of bull-fighting. Yet here Goya has all but suppressed the shifty glitter of his eye, the weak sensuality of his mouth, and flushed his coarsely handsome face with triumph and the pride of half-savage manhood.

But if to the unbiassed mind the evidence of the pictures themselves is not wholly convincing, there remains the incontrovertible testimony of Goya's own letters. In his correspondence with princes, which as Muther himself admits is "full of the most excessive servility," his expressions

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of respect may be discounted as merely common form, phraseology, as stereotyped as the "*s.s.q.b.s.m.*" (your servant who kisses your hand) with which to this day every ordinarily polite Spaniard subscribes his letters. But fortunately a correspondence of a far more intimate nature has been preserved, that which he carried on throughout the greater part of his life with his old schoolfellow, Martin Zapater y Clavería of Zaragoza. To him Goya confided the familiar details of his domestic life, his health, his difficulties, his successes, all that touched him most closely. Here surely we may reasonably expect to find some outpouring of that bitter scorn of princes which his close relations with the Court may be supposed to have compelled him to keep secret in Madrid.

But what do we find ? We find him telling his friend that he was "very pleased with the kindness with which he was received by the royal family and great personages." He is undisguisedly proud of the friendliness of the King's manner towards him. "To-day I delivered a picture to the King," he relates in another letter, "which he himself had commanded me to paint for his brother, the King of Naples ; and I have had the felicity of having given him much pleasure, so that he not only spoke his praise but putting his hands on my shoulders half embraced me." Impossible to mistake the note of satisfaction with which he records

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that half-embrace by Majesty ! Occasionally he joined the royal party on a shooting expedition, and once when he had shot a rabbit he is careful to relate how Don Luis, brother of the old King, exclaimed : “ Why, this dauber is more of an expert than I am ! ” (*Este pintamonas aún es más aficionado que yo*). Nor was he only gratified by the condescension of royalty ; he shows an equal pleasure in recounting the affability of the King’s ministers. He visited Aranjuez to paint the upstart Godoy, now become Duque de la Alcudia, who, according to Muther, was the object of his especial loathing and contempt. To his friend he writes of his visit in the following terms :—“ The minister went to the greatest lengths in showing attention to me, taking me with him for a drive in his coach, assuring me of his friendship in the warmest terms possible ; permitted me to dine with my cloak on, as it was very cold ; learnt to talk on his fingers ” (Goya was at this time stone deaf) “ and ceased eating in order to converse with me.” This is not the language of contempt but of complacency.

To me it is abundantly clear that Goya was frankly pleased with the position which he held at Court, with the favour of the royal family and the deference shown him by the grandees. To judge exclusively by the passages which I have quoted it would even seem difficult to acquit him altogether of a suspicion of snobbishness. Whatever his theories may have been, and however warmly

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he may have given his assent to the new revolutionary doctrines, not a little of the old social prejudice still clung about him. In his heart of hearts I have no doubt that Goya *was* a revolutionary and, in the intellectual sense, an anarchist; but it is characteristic of him that he never allowed his intellectual beliefs to endanger his worldly prospects. Here again we encounter that shrewd, practical sagacity of the peasant, which I have already several times commented upon. The native of Fuendetodos preserved the peasant's keen sense of the value of the sound and solid foundations of material well-being. For Don Quixote the wages of an unmarketable honour; for Sancho his kingdom and revenues and his thirty thousand black vassals convertible into white and yellow coin. Goya took care not to offend when offence might have involved the loss of his fifty thousand reals per annum, not to speak of the five hundred ducats for the upkeep of the coach. Satirising his royal patrons was scarcely compatible with his steady pursuit of his own interest. He knew how to accommodate himself to circumstances. He never associated himself with the precarious fortunes of a political party. He contrived to retain his place in the sunshine of Court favour in the successive reigns of Charles III., Charles IV., the usurping Joseph and the restored Ferdinand. "Kings may come and kings may go," he well might have sung in the style of the time-

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serving vicar, "but I am *el Pintor de Cámara, señor!*"

I had almost forgotten the question which raised this discussion of Goya's political principles—the reason why he added his own portrait to those of the members of the King's family in the royal group. The precedent of Velasquez in "*Las Meninas*" must of course have been in his mind; but when I look at that intrusive plebeian face in the background I am conscious not only of an assertion of bluff Aragonese independence, an affirmation that he was as good as any of them, but also of a secret satisfaction in thus associating on the same canvas, for the attention of posterity, the persons of his Most Catholic Majesty and Francisco Goya y Lucientes of Fuendetodos.

Let us return to the ante-room of the long gallery. You may remember that when we first entered it I exclaimed, to your surprise, "*La Maja Vestida! La Maja Desnuda,*" and before I could explain the chapter came to an end. We then made a tour of the long gallery and the Salon of Ribera and the Sala de Retratos, and, all the time during which I was making random remarks about Spanish painting, I knew that you were wanting to return to the ante-room and sit down in front of the *Majas* and look at them for a full hour in silence. (The worst of it is that in a book there can never be any silence. Somebody has to go on

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talking all the time. I wonder if to all writers come those intimidating moments which overtake me so frequently—if they pause in their busy labour and overhear, with the critical detachment of one of their auditors, that same, small, monotonous voice rising and falling over so many pages, and realise with an unnerving dismay that it is their own ! It never ceases, save only on those occasional pages when the concluding paragraph of a chapter expires before reaching the bottom, and then there is a refreshing, brief, white space of silence. If I had my way I would not surround “La Maja Desnuda” with a buzz of words and tedious discussions as to whether she is really the Duchess of Alba or not. I would just insert the most perfect reproduction of her procurable in colour and leave her there in her divested beauty, with twelve blank pages before and after her, pages of silence, in the perusal of which the reader might for once become a dreamer. I suppose the publisher might object, but you, I am sure, print-weary reader, would not.)

Possibly you are wondering all this time what a *maja* really is. I confess I am not very certain myself, as there is no exact English equivalent. She was native to Madrid, and flourished at the close of the eighteenth century. She was an explosive, flashy young person, with a vivid taste for finery in dress and jewels, which you must not be too curious in questioning how she found

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means to gratify. She herself would probably tell you that she kept a flower stall or helped in a shop, and we must take her word for it. The *majo*, her masculine companion, who did a little tinkering or huckstering in his more strenuous moments, shared her passion for extravagance in attire, her indolence, arrogance, audacity and fire. Together they inhabited the garlicky quarter of Lavapiés and Maravillas, an irresponsible population drawn from all parts, combining in a single character the swagger of Andalucía, the gaiety of Valencia, the sombre *fougue* of Castille, inflamed by a fierce patriotism, if the meaning of that ill-used word may be extended to imply a passionate attachment to the national costume and a hearty detestation of the French. The *maja* was closely akin to the *manola*, and the ancestress of the *chula* of the present day.

That Goya's *maja* was a real *maja* seems improbable, at any rate she can scarcely have been a typical one. Legend has it that the title merely disguises the identity of the beautiful Duquesa de Alba,¹ with whom the artist was on terms of great

¹ It is impossible to write anything about Goya without this elusive lady turning up like a bad sixpence, if she will forgive me the locution. She is the heroine of that amazing and improbable romance which has been woven out of the meagre authentic details of the painter's life. This much is certain, that she charmed Goya away from her elderly rival, the Duchess of Osuna, who had rather adopted him as her protégé, that her frustrated competitor appealed to the Queen and procured a royal order enforcing her temporary withdrawal to her country seat at San Lucar in

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intimacy, but although there is a resemblance between the two, in figure rather than in face, the ascription is more than doubtful. The *Majas* were originally in possession of Godoy, who could no doubt have disclosed the identity of the model in his Memoirs, had he chosen to do so. Goya painted her twice, clothed and unclothed, in the same posture, reclining with her hands clasped behind her head on a divan of green velvet spread with silvery draperies and cushions. Clothed, she wears a yellow and black bolero jacket, a sash of silvered rose, and a clinging white lavender-tinted skirt which reveals rather than hides the contours of her limbs.

Of all the nudes reclining at their ease in the galleries of Europe "La Maja Desnuda" is the nudest. Some there are whose nudity seems to clothe them like a natural garment. The nudity of Titian's "Eve," for instance, just a few yards farther down

Andalucia; that Goya accompanied her thither and on the journey contracted the chill which unhappily resulted in his permanent loss of hearing; that he shared her exile for a year, at the end of which he returned to Madrid at the instant command of the King. It may further be noted that, at the time when these reputed portraits of the Duchess of Alba were painted, Goya had already entered upon his fifty-sixth year, a rather frosty season, surely, for the blossoming of romance!

The Court painter did not "abandon the emoluments and prestige" of his post, as Sir Frederick Wedmore has stated in his admirable summary in "Painters and Painting." He was careful to obtain a special leave of absence, and returned promptly when he was recalled, a victor, nevertheless, since he succeeded in obtaining the recall of the Duchess also.

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the gallery, seems to be less physical than spiritual. She belongs to a primitive, elemental world, as yet unperplexed by conventions and proprieties. She is the eternal feminine, but more eternal than feminine, appealing not so much with the particularity of a woman as with the generality of a fact of nature, one in kind with the green earth and its teeming progeny. By the side of this palpitating *maja* the "Venus" of Velasquez appears scarcely to be a nude at all, so statuesque is she in her marble-like immobility. Moreover there was a gravity and circumspection in Velasquez's outlook which his less evenly constituted countryman never attained to. He seems to have observed his model with a kind of divine detachment, to have been interested in her merely as a beautiful surface bounded by a beautiful line. I have a private fancy that he never saw her face except in the reflection of the mirror, and I am sure that he never addressed a word to her, unless it were to inquire politely whether she was not tired of lying so long in the same position. Perhaps Manet's "Olympia" is next-of-kin to Goya's "Maja." She also strikes you with the same unmodified shock of vitality; but she is more distant and impersonal; there is no allurements in that spare, anatomical body, no invitation in that square and unflinching gaze. If she could speak I always feel that she would merely remark: "Observe, I beg you, the perfect quality of my painting."

"La Maja Desnuda" says nothing. She lies and

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waits. Her repose is all expectancy. Her body can scarcely be said to be at rest, so keenly does an inner vitality set the flesh quivering, and the pulses athrob. In the "Venus" of Velasquez the bounding lines of the figure are long and level like those of sleeping waves; here they are rippling and restless with the motion of a laughing, dancing sea. "Venus" will never change her posture till the end of time; you cannot gaze at the "Maja" without momentarily expecting to see the foot slip over the edge of the coverlet, the arms untwine behind the head. It is notable how all the expression is concentrated in the body; the face is relatively summary in execution, and though it has a certain smiling seductiveness, yet had it been averted, like that of "Venus," there would have been no subtraction from the complete expression of the personality. The figure too, has an inexplicable flavour of modernity. She owns no kinship with the passive Susannas and timeless Eves of the past. She is alien to the elect and temperate Madonnas. And how infinitely far is she removed from the grave, eternal type of Greece. All that woman had gained of sharper definition of personality, of subtler consciousness, of finer perception, of added delicacy, allurements and nervous sensibility, in her long journey from the ancient world to the dawn of the nineteenth century, is expressed or suggested in that single, frail, sensitive, flawless form. As one begins to divine the significance of the "Maja Desnuda" one

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begins to doubt the existence of an eternal feminine. For there was one feminine of Antiquity, another of the Middle Ages, another of the Renaissance and another of the Rococo. If woman is elemental, as she is said to be, she is the most mutable element of creation, changeful as the colours of a jewel when the light falls upon it at varying angles, adapting herself body and soul to the shifting moods of the world, the same neither yesterday nor to-day nor for ever.

“ Daughter of the ancient Eve,
We know the gifts ye gave—and give.
Who knows the gifts which you shall give,
Daughter of the newer Eve ? ”

XI

SAN ANTONIO DE LA FLORIDA

I THINK I felt a keener curiosity to visit the Church of San Antonio de la Florida than I have ever felt to visit any church before—excepting only the Baptistery and the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna. I don't mean to imply that the Italian Byzantine churches have anything in common with the late eighteenth-century chapel in Madrid beyond this, that the structure of each is merely a kind of framework for the decoration. One goes to see the mosaics in the one case and the frescoes of Francisco Goya in the other. And the cause of my curiosity was the recollection of the amazing accounts I had read of the tricks which the wilful genius has played in this little sanctuary. The comments of Mr William Rothenstein are highly suggestive. "Imagine," he says, "a coquettish little church with a white and gold interior, more like a boudoir than a shrine, but furnished with altar, and seats, and confessionals. One's nostrils expect an odour of *frangipane* rather than incense, and it must be admitted that Goya's frescoes do not strike a discordant note in this indecorously holy place." And Richard Muther, the German

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critic, describes the effect as “an artistic *can-can*—Casanova transferred to colour.”

Goya received the commission to decorate the church in 1798 and, dashing at his task with that violent energy with which all his happiest work was achieved, completed the whole undertaking within four months. Every morning he drove in a hired chariot from his house on the other side of the Manzanares to the church and returned in the evening in the same manner, paying for the double journey the somewhat exorbitant fare of fifty-six reals. In the July of the following year the church was opened for public worship, or perhaps we should rather say for the public inspection of the latest achievement of Madrid's most popular painter. The verdict was unanimously favourable. The Madrileños are said to have gone wild with excitement over the novel and alluring decorations, and the master wrote to his friend Zapater telling him “the King and Queen are mad on your friend Goya.” Charles IV. marked his approbation by raising Goya to the rank of *Primer Pintor de Cámara*, with a yearly salary of fifty thousand reals¹ and an additional allowance of five hundred crowns to defray the expenses of the upkeep of a coach—this last provision enabling the painter, no doubt, to effect a very considerable saving in cab fares!

It was therefore with a curious sense of

¹ In the actual currency a *real* is worth twenty-five *centimos*.

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expectancy that I set out to visit San Antonio one fine spring morning at an hour when Madrid was just waking from sleep. I chose the early morning because I supposed the light would be better then, because I knew the building would be open, for the church has other uses than those of a museum, and because I believe that the early morning is the proper time to see pictures and read verses and hear masses and to partake in all serene and wholesome activities of the spirit generally. The early morning smell, which is another incentive to early rising, was indeed lacking, for it never descends upon cities, but the odour of the coffee-roasters cheerily roasting in the gutters made satisfactory amends for its absence. The trams were running, of course, or perhaps I should say circulating, for "running" implies a degree of momentum to which they very rarely attain. It was surprising to find them up so early, for they retire even later than the Madrileños; but then they require less rest—in fact, I am not certain that they take any rest at all, beyond the long and frequent rests which they indulge in at the stopping-places along the route. Their bells were ringing as clamorously for a free course as in the more crowded hours of the day, not because the course was not already perfectly clear, but because the clamour has become a habit. I boarded one that was entering the Calle Mayor and, changing into another just beyond the Royal Palace, descended

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the steep incline past the Estación del Norte and proceeded for about a mile along the Paseo de la Florida.

Adjacent to the residence of the kings, this avenue in Goya's time was one of the most fashionable promenades of the town, but the district has since suffered a reverse of fortune. The Paseo borders the Manzanares, Madrid's makeshift for a river. But for a constant dredging of its sandy bottom I believe the ineffectual stream would be in danger of choking up altogether. It serves, however, as a great open-air laundry of the town. On its banks acres and acres of Madrid's underclothing are spread out to dry. Of the festive parties, picnicking, dancing and merry-making, as Goya has depicted them in his cartoons for the tapestries, I saw no trace—indeed, considering the earliness of the hour, I never expected to see any. But no one every thinks of picnicking on the banks of the Manzanares nowadays at any hour of the day.

At length the tram stopped at a little plain, stuccoed, classical structure, standing some way back from the road, surrounded by trees. It looked not unlike a rather pretentious lodge at a nobleman's park gates, though not in such good repair. It had the air of having seen better days, in keeping with the quarter generally. On entering the building I received a similar impression of shabbiness. The white and gold had dulled to grey

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and drab, the plaster was chipped, the altars uncared for, the furniture restricted to a few rickety benches. And here, where a century ago the ladies of fashion used to gather to display the latest modes of the Directoire or the Empire, knelt half-a-dozen aged women, faithful to the perennial mode of the black shawl, praying with a fervency to which I dare say the little church in its better days was wholly unaccustomed. The entrance of a stranger at so early an hour momentarily distracted their attention. Observing me gazing fixedly upwards, they too glanced uneasily at the frescoed dome overhead, doubtless supposing that I had discovered something amiss with the roof. Then, as if reassured by the vague vision of angelic forms that the decoration was as it should be, they resumed their pious exercises, oblivious as ever of the fact that above them was spread the master work of Goya's ecclesiastical painting.

The miniature church consists only of a central dome, with spandrels, flanked by four arches. The purpose of the frescoes, therefore, was not, as in the cathedral at Zaragoza, to add the glow of colour to an imposing architectural effect ; it was rather the function of the church to serve as a framework for the frescoes. The building was entrusted to Goya, as it might have been a canvas, for him to fill in with a single design. And it is to be noted that Goya was for once allowed a free hand. Here was no querulous chapter to question the

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exiguity of celestial draperies, no pedantic brother-in-law Bayeu to impose academical restrictions. The sole consideration that can have affected the strict dictates of his artistic conscience may have been a desire to produce something that would be pleasing to the pretty ladies of the Court, who made this little church their favourite rendezvous.

The fresco of the dome illustrates an incident in the life of St Anthony: the miracle of the saint raising a murdered man to life in order that he might reveal the name of his assassin and so exculpate one who had been falsely charged with the crime. The saint, clad in the habit of a Franciscan friar, stands on a slight eminence, and bends forward with uplifted hand in a gesture of command; the resuscitated man, naked and cadaverous, attends with a painful effort to the saint's questioning; between the two stands a woman with arms outspread, as if passionately protesting the innocence of the man mistakenly accused of the murder. This central group, emphasised by being thrown against a luminous background of open sky, is executed with great feeling and dramatic effect. The problem of giving unity and cohesion to a circular composition Goya has solved by an original and telling device. Round the base of the cupola he painted a plain balustrade, against which lean a crowd of men, women and children, the more or less indifferent spectators of the miracle. The effect is startlingly

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realistic, unlike that of any other fresco I have ever seen. One receives the impression of a crowd of people, not merely represented, but actually present in the gallery of the church.

Goya has shifted the centre of interest from the saint to the crowd—just as we should expect him to do. Saints did not interest him, the crowd always did. Moreover he did not paint an imaginary crowd—a thirteenth-century Italian crowd—he painted the crowd as he knew it, the crowd of Madrid. Here are *majas* and courtesans with mantillas over their heads and fans in their hands resting their elbows on the rail of the balustrade and gazing indifferently down into the church below, dandies with their cloaks and pigtails and three-cornered hats, bare-armed women who look as if they had just come from washing clothes in the Manzanares, as indeed they probably had, beggars, loafers, street arabs sitting astride the railing—the whole tag-rag and bobtail of the *pueblo bajo*. Some look across at the saint in amazement, others throw him a disinterested glance, most laugh and chatter among themselves.

This representation of a miracle of the Church has provoked a vast deal of criticism, most of which appears to me to be much ado about nothing. "All that the Church paintings of the past had created is despised, forgotten," exclaims Richard Muther, "and this satire upon the Church and all its works in the land of Zurbaran and Murillo!"

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Another critic remarks: "Not one of his countrymen realised the irreverent irony of his work."¹ Quite true—the priest saying Mass this morning was not in the least upset, so far as I could see, each time he turned round and faced the decoration to wish us his *Dominus vobiscum*, by any suspicion of an ironical intention in the frescoes. And yet another critic marvels that Goya's Spanish apologists see "no impropriety or extravagance in surrounding the figure of a reverend saint with a crowd of roysterers, prostitutes, cutpurses and Manzanares scoundrels."² And yet I do not remember ever to have heard the Evangelists charged with impropriety or extravagance in surrounding a Figure more revered even than St Anthony with publicans and sinners. "Casanova transferred to colour," the allusion is perhaps more apt than the writer intended. It is difficult to determine whether a more vivid picture of the citizens of Madrid in the latter half of the eighteenth century is presented by this fresco or by Casanova's description of them in the seventh volume of his Memoirs. It almost seems as if it were the critic and not the painter who had forgotten all that the Church paintings of the past had created. No doubt it is the business of the preacher to underline the moral of the great events of ecclesiastical history, but the tradition

¹ C. Gascoigne Hartley.

² A. F. Calvert, "Goya."

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of the Church painters has been rather to present them dramatically, transferring the scene from the historical past to the actual present. In "getting vital truth out of the vital present" Goya assuredly did not abandon the great tradition of the Church's art.

That the profane crowd seldom responds to the inner significance of any spiritual event that is taking place in its midst is distressing but none the less true. As I looked at Goya's fresco in the Church of San Antonio, and reflected upon the comments that it had provoked, I could not help calling to mind an event that I had seen the day before—the open-air Mass in the Paseo de la Castellana, which was celebrated on the occasion of the *jura de la bandera*, the ceremony of the kissing of the flag by the new recruits. Let it be supposed that a painter had been commissioned to depict the scene at the most solemn moment of the rite, that of the Elevation of the Host, in what manner should he have treated it? According to these critics who see irony and irreverence in any representation of the heedlessness of the mob, I suppose he should have treated it ideally, as a moment of intense popular emotion, drawing a solemn significance from the long lines of kneeling infantry, the abasement of the regimental colours, the adoration of the monarch, the hush and awe of the crowd. As edifying a scene as the pious mind could wish, but unfortunately one quite at variance with the

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facts. Where I was standing, not far from the flower-decked altar, all was confusion and uproar. The people in the crowd jostled one another and tiptoed to get a better view. An enterprising fellow who had improvised a stand with a plank and a couple of stools vociferously invited the spectators to get up and see the show—"Two reals, the best view of the Mass and the Kings, two reals!" And a woman with a basket of oranges never ceased bawling out: "Two fat oranges a penny!" In the carriages behind, ladies in mantillas fanned themselves and gossiped. Only here and there a man or a woman attempted to kneel in the midst of the crowd. Nothing in the least edifying—but thus it happened.

"Thus it happened," these were the words that Goya scratched beneath an etching depicting some scene of outrage in the War of Independence; he might have written them under every picture that he painted. How St Anthony's miracle actually happened, and whether it ever happened at all, he probably knew little and cared less; but he knew all about the Madrid crowd and he knew that so they would have stared and chattered and fanned themselves had one been raised from the dead in their midst.

The frescoes upon the spandrels and the four arches flanking the cupola seem to have shocked the critics even more than the scene of the miracle. It is here, I suppose, that we are to detect the

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atmosphere of the boudoir. Goya gave to his figures in the cathedral of Zaragoza a background of pure paradisaal flame-coloured light, to those of *Aula Dei* the serene light of day and the freshness of windy skies ; here he has excluded the sense of infinitude by surrounding his figures with gold-spangled silk hangings. Unquestionably the atmosphere is a little stifling, perhaps even scented. The figures themselves are angels and cherubs—or rather that is what they are intended to be—as a matter of fact, they are very captivating, prettily dressed young ladies and very jolly fleshy babies. Here again we are told it was Goya's intention to satirise the Church and the Church's conception of Paradise. One critic has even discovered that "the babes are entirely without the illusion of divine origin." Poor babes, their birth must indeed have been a sleep and a forgetting ! And the angels receive a severe reprimand for being "wanton," "venturesome," "piquant," and much else which it appears that an angel cannot be without grave irregularity. One is reminded of the Chapter of *El Pilar*, and their objection to the indiscreet draperies of the figure of Charity. One is also reminded of a saying of Courbet's, "Paint angels ? But who on earth has ever seen an angel ?" I really don't know that there is anything more to be said.

What is a painter to do when he is commissioned to paint a mystical, sexless being like an angel ?

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All that he can do is to paint the human form divine, and attach a pair of wings. Probably he will also seek to give to the expression certain ideal qualities of purity, strength, serenity or benignity. The early Italians seem to have preferred the type of girlhood in order to express a grave, wondering, virginal innocence or even sexlessness. The angels of Velasquez and Murillo hint at the peasant model, sober, robust and maternal. There is no essential difference between the angel in Velasquez's "Christ at the Column" and the peasant woman who represents the much-cumbered Martha in his "Christ in the House of Martha." The Burne-Jones type of angel is merely a hollow-cheeked, pale-lipped, ascetic young man. Goya's ideal of angelhood was at one with his ideal of womanhood. And the qualities which he appears to have desiderated in woman were, first, physical beauty, and next, that melting, rather invertebrate tenderness which for his age constituted the ultimate charm of the sex.

His ideal seems to have undergone a change since the days when he worked for the monks of Aula Dei in the solitude and serenity of the Aragonese countryside. In his paintings for the monastery, his women have the beauty of an uncorrupted freshness, of natural, happy movement, the half-animal graces which only a life lived close to the soil can bestow. Since then he had become familiar with the life of courts. His

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friendship with the duchesses of Alba and Osuna had doubtless quite erased his memories of the Pillars of Fuendetodos. Perhaps no man can live long in a capital and keep his soul wholly uncontaminated. The atmosphere of the Court never weakened the fibres of Goya's robust virility and independence of character, yet I am inclined to think that he breathed the tainted air to his hurt. This silken paradise, inhabited by angels of a delicious and hectic beauty, is the work of a man who is losing touch with grave, simple and elemental things, who has exchanged the vision of the far horizon for that of the soft hangings of the boudoir, who is more familiar with the sophisticated graces of the *mondaine* than with the spontaneous gestures of a child of nature. Standing beneath the painted silk canopies of the chapel one remembers a little longingly the pure, sparkling air of desolate Fuendetodos.

Mystical and sexless Goya's angels certainly are not ; their beauty is purely human and feminine, it is even local, Madrileño in fact. Their dress too is very mundane, with more than a suggestion of the theatre. One angelic figure indeed wears a costume identical with that of La Ideal Chelito, whom you may see dancing every evening any time after midnight at the Salon Madrid. Theatrical are their gestures as they pose with telling and self-conscious charm against the gold-dusted curtains. But of the charge of indecorum, of

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wanton or voluptuous intention, they must be instantly acquitted. They are doing their utmost to look devout ; they are melting with the tenderest sentiment ; they have summoned tears to their long eyelashes to enforce their supplications ; and if they are deliciously beautiful, and cannot help knowing it, must we therefore suspect the sincerity of their devotion ? Fallen angels they may perhaps be, but they aspire with genuine fervour to regain their former innocence. All that there was of delicacy and refinement in Goya's imagination he has put into these radiant figures. To my thinking, the sceptic in him was in abeyance when he executed these frescoes. He peopled Paradise as he would wish it to have been peopled, and no doubt the Catholic Madrid of his day was in agreement with him. In one act he endeavoured to combine his homage to the Church and to the sex. He was as far from attempting to satirise the Church as the Church was from being scandalised by his work.

This little Church of San Antonio provides a more illuminating commentary upon the condition of religion in Spain, or at all events in Madrid, at the close of the eighteenth century than many books of history. In matters of outward observance Madrid was as punctilious as a town can well be. When a priest carrying the Viaticum passed the door of the theatre did not the doorkeeper cry out, " God ! " and was not the performance

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suspended, audience and actors falling on their knees, until the tinkle of the little bell in the street had passed out of earshot? But the seed of true religion which struck such mighty roots in Toledo and Avila, and many another city of the Peninsula, fell on stony ground in Madrid. On taking a glance at these frescoes in the once fashionable little church, so gay, so gracious, so mundane, I was irresistibly reminded of the apophthegm which Don Diego, Casanova's sententious bootmaker, addressed to his daughter, "*Ma fille, la véritable dévotion est inséparable de la gaieté.*" The sentiment I believe to be thoroughly un-Spanish, but it expresses fitly enough the spirit of San Antonio de la Florida.

XII

TOLEDO

ARE you getting tired, patient reader, of Madrid and museums and churches and Goya ? I don't mind admitting that I am. I may as well confess what you have probably suspected all the time, that Goya is little more than a colourable excuse for being in Spain. It would perhaps be more honest to acknowledge that we have come here merely to enjoy ourselves. After all, I don't believe that the mediæval pilgrims journeyed to Canterbury solely, or even chiefly, for the purpose of performing their devotions at the shrine of the blessed martyr St Thomas ; half at least of the attraction was the sheer fun of the outing, the mere pleasure of journeying, and gossip and interest and adventure of the road. The Pilgrims' Way was to mediæval England very much what the Brighton Road is to-day, a pleasure highway ; but the pleasure was assuredly more social and joyous and humane—perhaps just because it was linked to some high human purpose. The difference between the mediæval and the modern holiday-maker is that the latter is under the delusion that in order to enjoy his holiday he must leave his soul behind. Doubtless that accounts for his restless-

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ness, for the senses are always restless when they have lost the companionship of the soul.

But where shall we go? How does Toledo strike you? No, the suggestion does not imply much originality; but it has this advantage, that we need not altogether abandon the pretext of our pilgrimage, for on referring to Gautier's "*Voyage en Espagne*" I observe that he mentions a notable picture by Goya in the sacristy of the cathedral, "an effect of night which Rembrandt would not have disowned." By making this our objective we shall still be able to preserve an agreeable sense of superiority to the mere tourist.

Toledo is usually despatched by the tourist in half-a-dozen hours—that is to say, in the interval between the arrival of the Madrid express at 11 A.M. and its departure at 5 P.M. At the booking office at Madrid the clerk hands you a return ticket automatically, and if you push it back and ask for a single one instead he peers out of the narrow aperture through which booking clerks communicate with the outer world, and surveys you with that air of disapproval which officials always assume whenever you show an inclination to err from the beaten track, which all well-regulated tourists follow without questioning. It is clear that you are not playing the game according to the proper rules. In manifesting a personal idiosyncrasy you have committed a breach of etiquette. In all foreign countries it is to be noted that the

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punctilious observance of an inflexible etiquette is expected of the traveller by guides, doorkeepers, porters, sacristans, vergers, distributors and collectors of tickets, and all that prolific army of functionaries whose business it is not so much to minister to his wants as to prescribe and regulate them. He is but an amateur in travel—they are specialists. They have been trained from infancy to deal with the tourist. They know precisely what itinerary he must follow, whether he must travel by train, steamboat, landau and pair, camel, mule or on foot, where he must lunch and what varieties of cold food he must lunch upon, what churches he must visit and when, what pictures he must see and how many minutes he must be allowed before each in which to experience his emotion or indifference. To crave a more liberal allowance of time than the scheduled programme permits is just as bad form as to ignore a revered name, such as Raphael or Rubens, in order to linger over the work of that insignificant painter *Ignoto*, whom every self-respecting tourist coldly ignores. Freedom in travel, in fact, like every other form of freedom, is not to be enjoyed without making an obstinate stand for it.

Therefore it is necessary to be quite firm with the clerk at the booking office at Madrid and to refuse categorically an *ida y vuelta* ticket, howsoever seducing may be the reduction of the fare.

I don't know whether it was to punish me for

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my obduracy in defying the regulations that the engine driver contrived to run his engine off the lines midway between Madrid and Toledo. How he contrived it I cannot tell, but when I descended from the carriage and strolled along the track to inquire into the cause of the delay (such investigations are not resented in Spain) there was the locomotive placidly reposing on the sleepers. I suppose it was only a matter of a couple of inches from the level of the sleepers to the summit of the rail, but for a locomotive a leap of two inches is a very awkward feat to accomplish. It requires the co-operation, gesticulation, objurgation and expostulation of all the railway employees who can be conveniently summoned to the spot. A pair of *guardia civiles* surveyed the scene of the catastrophe pessimistically, curling their moustaches with a fine air of detachment. The locomotive, which appeared to have been built upon the design of George Stephenson's "Rocket," had a perceptible list, inclining its steeple-like chimney in the direction of the sunset. I feared that all the King's *guardia civiles* would never be able to re-instate it in its former position. Apparently the catastrophe was not altogether unforeseen, for the engine was provided with a complete repairing outfit. Levers were adjusted, screws turned, ropes hauled, and the work of elevating the helpless monster progressed surely but infinitely slowly. Hours passed ; the sun dipped below the edge of

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the plain and the moon rose above the Guadarrama mountains. The spot was as bleak and desolate as you could find in the whole tableland of New Castille. The inhabitants of a lonely hamlet flocked to the line and, standing or squatting in the red glare of the lantern, followed every movement of the mechanics with large solemn eyes. At length, millimetre by millimetre, the engine was persuaded back on to the rails and with a screech of triumph steamed slowly forward along the plain.

The entry into Toledo is more dramatic even than that into Zaragoza. Here a team of five mules is harnessed to the public conveyance and ascends the cliff on the summit of which Toledo is perched at a gallop. We thundered through the labyrinth of stony streets like an avalanche, grazing the houses on either side and sending the occasional pedestrian flying for shelter under arches and doorways. The darkness, the dizzy crossing of the ravine by the lofty Gothic bridge, the strange elevation of the mountain city and the extravagance of its sky-line, lent to the commonplace act of driving to one's hotel all the zest of a romantic adventure.

Toledo is one of those lamentable cities on the lamps of whose railway stations "Ichabod" should be inscribed. Its glory is departed. It is a city with a past—a more vivid and splendid past than that of any other city of the Peninsula. It is the ancient heart of Spain. But now that heart has

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almost ceased to beat. Almost—for Toledo is not dead as Avila and Segovia are dead. There is usually a noble gravity and peace in a dead city, one that has died a natural death I mean, and is resigned to its fate, forgetful of its throbbing past and asking only to be allowed to sleep undisturbed. In Avila and Segovia you can wander about the large deserted spaces and beneath mouldering walls and dream to your heart's content, for no one invites you for a small fee to inspect historic sites and ancient monuments. They have not yet been embalmed in museums. But the tragedy of Toledo is that it is not dead. It is in its second childhood. It subsists on the alms of the tourist. It narrates to him its long and troubled history, like a garrulous old woman, shows him with a kind of morbid pleasure its decay and its deformities, reminds him of its ruined beauty and then whines for a peseta. It is a humiliating ending for so splendid a career.

Once impregnable on its craggy heights, now it is invaded every day from 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. by the cosmopolitan army of pleasure-seekers—that invincible army which has overthrown so many of the world's fair cities. They patrol the streets singly and in companies. They are recognisable by a certain grim interrogatoriness of aspect, an intent and searching curiosity of the eye, as of those who are looking for something that they have lost. In this instance they are looking for something that

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they have destroyed—they are looking for romance.

The Chapter of the Cathedral wisely appoints the hour of ten for the singing of High Mass, an hour before the arrival of the Madrid express, you will observe. All is decently over before the vanguard of the invading army delivers its first assault upon the secular silence of the great church. So meagre was the attendance of Toledans at this ceremony, however, that I could almost have wished for the addition of that half-devotion which the northern tourist permits himself when he bows his head in the House of Rimmon, curious, furtive, grudging, half apology and half reprobation. A few black-clothed old women, a few black-caped old men—the size and quality of the congregation were dismally disproportionate to the splendour of the ritual, the numbers of the performers, the titanic magnitude of the temple. The canons filed—tottered and shuffled rather, for they appeared to be all of incalculable age—into the *coro*, itself a church, more elaborate and exquisite than some capitals can boast of, and the procession of celebrants with their assistants ascended to the Capilla Mayor, which displays with ostentatious prodigality all the wealth and craftsmanship of mediæval Spain.

The office proceeded with all its traditional solemnity, as it had proceeded every morning, I

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suppose, for five hundred years less or more. As the immemorial drama unfolded itself, no sense of an expanding triumph visited me ; in its stead a numbing chillness gradually froze my spirits. How should I explain it to you ? And is it worth explaining ? Probably you know the sensation, but to me it was strange. For I have always found myself most happy and secure in those places where the ancient order still survives, not petrified as in a museum, or artificially stimulated as in a modern revival of pageantry, but still sentient, thriving and unselfconscious ; where the processional movement of the ages, continuous and unbroken, imposes itself upon the imagination ; where I can see plainly with my own eyes the bared and knotted roots through which the flourishing tree of life draws up from the dark night of the earth its everlasting sap. For this reason alone I can never hear without a daily renewed wonder this most ancient rite, in which is caught, as in a net, the faith and tradition and language of so many ages, so many peoples, even the fashion of their vesture, the attitude of their bodies and the very intonation of their voices, so that in listening to it one seems to overhear the vague murmur of the ocean of humanity. But this morning, in this cathedral of Toledo, it seemed not so much old as antiquated. Upon everything weighed the burden of an immense decrepitude—upon the building, the priests, the worshippers. The sap

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seemed at last to have dried up and the branch to hang withered on the tree, ready for falling. All those phrases which come so glibly to many mouths, "outworn creeds" "exploded superstitions" and the like, sounded mockingly, triumphingly in my ears. And my spirit rebelled against the domination of age. In this imprisoning cathedral I felt myself exiled from life and from youth. I looked around and everywhere I saw only "portions and parcels of the dreadful Past." Here everything young was banned. No, not quite everything, for suddenly behind me I was aware of a noise of pattering footsteps and childish laughter. I turned round and saw three gleeful urchins, joyously arrayed in scarlet cassocks and white lace surplices, staggering along beneath the weight of a gigantic folio, wooden-backed and iron-clasped. Panting, struggling, quarrelling, laughing, the merry group lurched uncertainly towards the choir. Then it swayed and broke. There was a detonating clap and the dust of centuries hung for a moment over a wriggling, gurgling mass of scarlet and lace. Blessed infants! What charitable providence sent you to me in my so urgent need? Or can it be that here was but another instance of the unfailing kindly wisdom of Mater Ecclesia, who foresees that there must come times when we shrink from her aspect of intolerable age and purposely summons the pagan children to diversify her solemn mysteries

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with their unheeding and divinely irreverent laughter ?

Now the long undulating "*Ite missa est*" was sung, and already the skirmishers of the approaching army were peering in at the doorway beneath check-cloth caps and flowing veils. It was time to hurry to the Sala Capitular and buy a ticket. Yes, a ticket, for the cathedral of Toledo, although it may dream the dreams of the Middle Ages, is run on strictly modern business principles. Blasco Ibañez will tell you all about it in his novel, "La Catedral," in which he has made a living personality of the cathedral itself. Listen to old Don Antolin on this matter of the tickets.

"A very slack day, Gabriel!" he remarks, examining his little book of counterfoils. "Being in the winter, so few people travel. Our best time is in the spring, when they say the English come in by Gibraltar. They go first to the fair in Seville, and afterwards they come to have a look at our Cathedral. Besides, in milder weather the people come from Madrid, and although they grumble, the flies crowd to see the giants and the big bell. Then I have to hurry with the tickets. One day, Gabriel, I took eighty duros. I remember it was at the last 'Corpus'; Mariquita had to sew up the pockets of my cassock, for they tore with the weight of so many pesetas. It was a blessing from the Lord. . . .

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a Sunday afternoon. The hot air vibrated in the narrow streets and the slit of sky overhead was colourless with heat. The churches and the museums were closed for their afternoon siesta—as a matter of fact, I believe I would not have crossed the street to visit them had they contained a thousand Goyas, but the knowledge that they were closed seemed to confirm my conviction that Toledo had nothing to show that could arouse a moment's interest. The morning papers from Madrid were filled with a meaningless jargon. My circulating library I had left behind, having brought with me only a single volume. Shall I tell you what it was?—a book strangely remote from the atmosphere of Toledo—"Far from the Madding Crowd." I thought that if I could transport myself to the dewy meadows of Wessex and feel the cool wind on the downs I might be able to forget this intolerable heat; but the very letters ran into one another as if the book had been printed from molten type. It was one of those afternoons when time stands still, and the last interest has perished out of life, and all things seem to be accomplished and ready for the end.

Staring vacantly out of the open door of the *fonda* I saw a horseman ride past. He wore a costume of black velvet, with lace at his wrists and neck, and on his head a widespreading hat garnished with an immense sable plume. Some soldier of the Catholic Kings, I dreamily supposed,

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riding off to Granada to fight the Moors. The clatter of his horse's hoofs had died away before I recollected that the Catholic Kings had been dead a very long time and that the costume was unusual for a horseman even on a Sunday afternoon in Toledo. And yet the costume did not appear altogether unfamiliar. Of course—now I remember where it was that I had seen it before—in the bull-ring. The man was an *alguacil* on the way to the *corrida*. So there was some life stirring in the moribund city after all. I got up and, looking among the papers and notices on the table, discovered a long blue handbill which announced that a *gran corrida de novillos* (a fight of young bulls) would take place in the Plaza de Toros de Toledo at half-past four o'clock on the 4th of May. The *espadas*, or gentlemen with the swords, were Antonio Blanco and one known as El Chico de Lavapies, a pet name which might be freely Englished as "The Whitechapel Bantam." A brilliant band of music would enliven the spectacle, so the bill went on to announce, the price of a seat (in the shade) was one peseta twenty centimos, and *los niños que no sean de pecho* (infants not at the breast) could not be admitted without tickets. To watch a fight of young bulls is not perhaps the pleasantest way of spending a Sunday afternoon, but what was the alternative? There appeared to be a complete dearth of alternatives. I glanced at the bill again, and noticed that there was no

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mention of any *picadores*, which indicated that the slaughter of horses was not to be included in the programme. I decided to go.

Beneath a moving canopy of dust we trudged down the long twisting road to the plain. Viewed from above the long black centipede of men might have been taken for a gigantic funeral procession. Arrived at the ring we made straight for our places in the shade. Opposite, the semicircle of empty seats blazed in the glare of the sun, with only here and there at wide intervals a peasant, handkerchief on head, who was willing to risk sunstroke in order to economise a few centimos. The sight of this circular bank of steep stone tiers, the shining, sandy arena between, the naked blue overhead, never fails to provoke in me a strange sense of remoteness from my own time and of nearness to the first pagan centuries of our era. A Roman of the Empire, had he been sitting in this Plaza de Toros de Toledo, would have found little that was unfamiliar, beyond the costume of the people and the strains of the brilliant band of music. I confess I am not one of those whom the spectacle depresses—I accept it as a perhaps not untimely reminder of that old, sleeping brutality in man, without a strain of which life would be, for all I know, not quite possible on this rude and death-stricken earth. More welcome it is to recognise the no less ancient delight in a ceremonial ordering of things which has all but passed away from the life

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of modern democracies. It is one of the superstitions of the modern man to distrust all modes of dignity, suspecting it, oddly enough, to be insincere and anti-democratic. He allows sincerity no other wear than the uniform of the citizen, trousers and a bowler hat. All forms of dressing up to him are foolishness, all fineness of gesture out of place, except perhaps in the arts. The Church and the bull-ring have at any rate this in common, that they preserve the tradition of a more simple age, when special acts had their special ritual, and the attitude of the mind always found a concrete expression in the attitude of the body.

Then was rehearsed again the familiar, time-honoured pantomime, which never loses its impressive charm. The glittering phalanx of *toreros* stepped bravely across the sand to salute the president in his box—a rhythmic swaying of lithe bodies and a twinkle of pink calves. They ranged themselves round the edge of the arena, hung their fine silvered *capotes de lujo* over the barrier, and took from the attendants on the other side the more workmanlike and blood-stained cloaks with which the real business is done. The sombre *alguacil* rode in, like the figure of Death in the Apocalypse, received the key of the *toril* from the president, and cantered out again with many practised curvets and caracoles. Then the expectant hush of a crowd holding its breath, the opening of the doors of the *toril*, and then——

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Well, then should have come the blind rush of an angry bull, *con muchos pies* (with many feet), as runs the expressive phrase of the ring. But you must remember that this was not a bull-fight proper, only a *novillada*. We waited with eyes fixed on the open door, but nothing emerged. At last a small horned head peeped round the corner of the barrier, peered timidly into the arena and then withdrew. This dismal lack of enthusiasm on the part of the chief performer was received with a growl of disapprobation from the stone benches. Another pause—the application of some ungentle persuasion behind the scenes—and then the head appeared again, followed this time by a slim body, as the little animal walked nervously into the ring, much as a self-conscious member of a company of amateur theatricals advances on to the stage. Manchegito, for such was his name, glanced round the arena as though he were looking for his mother, and not finding her there turned round and proceeded to walk back to his stable. But in the meantime the door of the *toril* had been closed. Somewhat disconcerted by this unpleasant trick he snuffed perplexedly over the edge of the barrier for a minute or two. But now El Chico de Lavapies, a ruffianly-looking brute with blue-shaved cheeks and an underhanging jaw, walked across the arena with a heroic swagger, which did not quite conceal an attitude of caution, approached to within a yard or two of the beast's hind-quarters and waved

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his cloak and stamped upon the ground. The bull wheeled round and surveyed the astonishing pink and silver apparition wonderingly. The Chico gesticulated with his arms, raised himself on the tips of his toes and spoke insultingly of the bull and its ancestors. Manchegito at length made a half-hearted charge at the flaunting cloak, encountered nothing but the unresisting air, and returned to search for the entrance to the *toril*.

Another member of the troupe next advanced with a pair of banderillas in his hands and dodged to and fro behind the bull, shouting to attract his attention. The bull refused however to be attracted, whereupon the man smote him sharply on the flank with his barbed stick. Manchegito quickly faced him, lowered his head, received the banderillas in the nape of the neck, and then, stung by the sudden pain, bounded about the arena like a bucking horse. Two more attempts were made to plant two other pairs of banderillas, but both without success, for the animal was now thoroughly frightened and his adversary apparently no less so.

It only remained for El Chico de Lavapies to give the *coup de grâce*. Armed with a sword and a small square of scarlet cloth he set out to meet the bull. The animal, however, scenting danger, did not stay to meet him, but leapt over the barrier into the narrow passage between the spectators and the ring. A gate was opened and

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Manchegito quickly found himself back in the arena. Again the *espada* faced him, but again he refused to face the *espada* and made his exit over the barrier as before. The *corrida*, which had never been anything that you could call a fight, now became nothing more than a chase. The timid, panting creature trotted across the ring from one side to the other, the little group of glittering manikins trotted after him with a pattering of slippered feet on the sand. From time to time the bull, always in search of the *toril*, leapt the barrier and was shoo'd back again into the ring. The shadow of the wall of the *plaza* crept inch by inch over the circle of sand. The spectators became impatient. "*Tengo sueño, matador*" (I'm getting sleepy), roared a sarcastic Toledan next to me.

At last El Chico, growing desperate, made a lunge—the sword struck the shoulder-blade and flew high into the air. The crowd jeered. Manchegito disappeared over the barrier. Having manœuvred the beast into position once more, he lunged again, slipped and fell. The crowd gave a startled cry of horror. The bull, however, disdain-
ing to take his adversary at a disadvantage, merely sniffed at the prostrate figure and walked away. The hero of Lavapies rose trembling with fear and fury and swore horrible vengeance upon his mild enemy. He rushed up to him and stuck the sword blindly into the shoulder. The stroke

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was a vile one. The sword just glanced under the skin, the blade emerging a little behind the foreleg. The animal trotted off with the weapon grotesquely dangling against its leg. "*Fuera ! Fuera !*" (Outside) yelled the crowd, resenting this lack of dexterity rather more, I suppose, than the maltreatment of the animal. The matador, white with passion, pursued his victim round the ring, delivering a series of vicious and ineffectual stabs. The weary animal began to falter, pawed the sand feebly and bellowed once or twice. The valour of the *toreros* rose visibly at this display of distress ; they waved their cloaks before the beast's glazing eyes, and dared even to touch the points of its horns with their hands. Amateurs of the sport clambered over the barrier, eager to take part in the fray. The *espada*, who was now nearly beside himself with rage, protested, that he, El Chico de Lavapies, and he alone, would kill the bull. And with a final rush he buried the sword in its body. The animal spread out its legs and fell.

Pandemonium reigned. The crowd screamed, jeered, hooted, whistled, stamped, flourished sticks and umbrellas and shook their fists. The butcher of Lavapies retired to the barrier, sat on the stone ledge at the foot of it and buried his head in his hands. He had met his Waterloo. Meanwhile the band struck up a brilliant air, the team of mules dragged out the carcass at a gallop, and the arena was cleared and sanded to make

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ready for the harrying of Manchegito's three little brothers.

It is only natural that the bull-fight, which in spite of perennial protest holds so prominent a place in the popular life of Spain, should have occupied in no small measure the brush and needle of the great delineator of Spanish manners. It is commonly believed that in his tumultuous youth Goya not infrequently entered the ring himself and performed exploits with the cloak and sword. No doubt he was quite capable of it, but the legend rests only upon the flimsy evidence of a supposititious letter signed "*Francisco de los toros*" (Francis of the bulls), which has never yet been produced, and would not prove anything if it had. His authentic letters, however, provide sufficient proof that he was an *aficionado* of the sport, and the numerous portraits which he painted of bull-fighters naturally brought him into close touch with the professional element of the ring. One of the earliest works which he produced on his return from Rome was the little picture of a bull-fight, which now hangs in the Real Academia de Bellas Artes; the subject figures among the tapestry cartoons; and late in life he executed the well-known *Tauromachia*, a series of thirty or more etchings illustrating the history and complete art of bull-fighting.

Whatever opinions may be held as to the barbarity of the sport, it is impossible to ignore the pictorial values of the bull-ring. The circular



Photograph : Anderson

THE BULL-FIGHT

FROM THE PAINTING IN THE REAL ACADEMIA DE BELLAS ARTES

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theatre, half in dazzling light, half in cool shadow, with the blue curtain of sky overhead ; the curves of the barrier and the arena ; the spectators crowded in dark masses, with the bare stretches of sun-bleached stone tiers between ; the gay processional entry of the company of glittering *toreros* ; the lithe and agile movements of the human body contrasting with the brute force or ponderous inertia of the bull ; the swaying entanglement of men, bull and horses ; here is a shifting scene of colour, light, life and motion which, if you can temporarily persuade the humanitarian in you to look the other way, presents a very moving beauty to the eye. It is characteristic of Goya that he seized upon not the æsthetic, but the tragic side of the spectacle. You will not find a single picture or plate of his illustrating the bull-ring which suggests any exceptional grace of bodily form or movement ; but in almost all you will be shocked with a frank and wilful exposition of all that is frightful, savage and intimidating in the spectacle—bulls thrust through and through with barbarous spears, horses and mules overthrown and disembowelled, dogs tossed and mangled, *toreros* mortally wounded, and even the spectators themselves impaled upon the horns of beasts that have run amuck. It is said moreover by experts that the fight is usually depicted without any correctness of technical detail, a fact which again demon-

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strates his lack of a practical knowledge of the art. The incidents which he chiefly selects for illustration are not the true *lances de lidia*, but sensational accidents, moments of panic, phenomenal feats of daring, freakish variations of the sport. At times he shows a grim irony in representing the victim as victor. In what is perhaps the most effective plate of the *Tauromachia* series the bull is seen standing in the midst of the flying, terror-stricken spectators, triumphant, avenging, with swinging tail, transfixing with his horns the limp body of a man.

Though he chose to emphasise its horror, Goya had, of course, an eye for the singular beauty of the bull-ring. In particular he was intrigued by that contrast of semicircular shadow, which creeps like a dark tide across the shining sand, with the dazzling whiteness of the arena. The lines of the barrier and the stone tiers have a simple and sweeping beauty of their own. And he was fascinated, as Mr Rothenstein has remarked, by that striking feature of the bull-ring, a girdle of figures encircling a vacant central space—a pattern which he appropriated with telling effect both in the picture in the *Academia* and in the lithographs which he executed fifty years later at *Bordeaux*.

The shadow had crept all the way across the sand, now stained with dark wet patches, by the time

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the last little carcass had been dragged out of the ring to the cheerful strains of the band. The crowd swarmed out of the *plaza*. I stayed and watched the long black centipede twisting up the white road until its tail had wriggled into the gates of the city on the hill. Then I wandered along the banks of the river, crossed the dizzy Alcantara bridge and climbed the heights on the farther side of the ravine. A long while in the lessening light I sat and gazed at the wild irregular sky-line, thin like paper against the purples and greens of the western sky. There is nothing quite like it in the world. It has something of the poignancy of a shrill cry. The whole city seemed to be on tiptoe for flight, exalted, aspiring, straining at its anchorage to the solid earth. As the light faded and its rocky base dissolved into shadows, the mystical city appeared at last to sever itself from its foundations and to float midway between earth and heaven.

It was quite dark when I climbed up the narrow, ill-lit streets. Toledo is a maze, in which I believe the very inhabitants only find their own homes by accident. I willingly left it to chance to direct me to my temporary home in the *fonda*. I was content to roam in the streets this night. No breath of air stirred in these winding lanes, but a refreshing coolness dropped like dew from the sky. I heard no sound ; I met no wayfarer ; the whole city was dreamlessly asleep. In the night its aspect

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seemed to change from Gothic to Moorish. Granada and Cordova never spoke to me so plainly of Africa as did Toledo as I wandered among those waste places on the edge of the ravine, littered and unkempt as a desert village.

Then I heard the sound of music, rapid and even and staccato, like a barrel-organ. I followed the direction of the sound and it led me to an ancient and palatial house, with a vast expanse of windowless wall rising sheer out of the dark lane. A faint light streamed with the loud music through a half-open door. I entered and found myself in a large *patio*, dimly lit by an oil lamp and one or two candles stuck on benches. In a corner a man at a barrel-organ ground out *El Garrotin*. On the uneven stone floor a company of men and girls shuffled to and fro, dancing with a grave and passionate intentness. The *patio* was open to the stars. Round the wall ran a wooden balcony, on which stood shadowy groups of spectators, gazing down upon the moving crowd below. I supposed that presently the music would cease and the company break up into laughing couples. But no—from time to time a couple fell out and rested upon a bench, that was all. The spectre at the barrel-organ never wearied; the shadows on the balcony never moved; the grave dancers neither laughed nor spoke.

It was a scene made for the brush of Goya, vivid, sombre, racial, throbbing with an immense

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and suppressed passion. Such sombre and sullen gaiety is not wholly European—in France or Italy or Germany I think you will not meet the like of it—it is African, and therefore, I would venture to say, Iberian. As I stood there, an unregarded spectator, it seemed to me as if the thin crust of the Europeanised surface of Spain had suddenly collapsed, revealing a glimpse of the ancient, smouldering, subterranean fires.

How deceitful are the appearances of cities ! Half-an-hour ago Toledo had shown herself to me mystical and aspiring—now I knew how deeply and tenaciously her living roots struck in to the primitive soil. She had no eye for her coronet of stars. Neither was she so dead as I had supposed. Now that I had my ear against her breast, how strongly I could hear the old heart beating ! Yet it was a frustrate and ineffectual life that was beating there. That splendid energy and passion which once spent itself in spreading the fiery cross of the Faith, in assailing the Moslem, in dominating new continents, was now cabined in a *patio* of the slums and found the only outlet for its fever in dancing, dancing. And in the sullen rhythm of the dance there was surely a kind of bitter exasperation at the consciousness of the futility of energy misspent. It was not the healthful beating of a sound heart—in this stifling courtyard, beneath the secret cloak of night, the ancient city was eating out its heart in mirthless and repining revelry.

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But I must not linger here—I believe they will dance till dawn—for I have to be back in the cathedral in the morning to hear Mass sung according to the Mozarabic rite. Alone in this one chapel in Toledo still survives the ancient Spanish liturgy, which came to Spain direct from the East and not by way of Rome, brought by the disciples of St John the Evangelist say some, though without much show of probability. The canons glanced at me with some surprise, for the stranger does not often enter the closed doors of the Mozarabe chapel so early in the morning. It was interesting to observe, if only with an antiquarian interest, the divergences from the Roman rite—the transposition and slightly different text of the Creed, the responses to the *Pater Noster* and the giving of the kiss of peace before the Canon instead of after the *Agnus Dei*. Surely the happy embrace of the celebrant, which is passed on in turn to each of the ministers, comes most fitly after the consummation of the sacrifice. I wish, however, that Rome had preserved that popular, mediæval, half-punning ejaculation: *Ave in ævum sanctissima caro*. . . . But I am indeed forgetting myself. You must be wondering what possible connexion there is between liturgical formulas and the painting of Goya. None whatever, so far as I can see. Yes, I am quite ready to return to Madrid now that I have satisfied my curiosity in the Mozarabe chapel. That was really one of the

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reasons why I wanted to come to Toledo, although I didn't mention it when I proposed this expedition for fear that you might raise objections. But you have at any rate seen a *novillada*. You really can't have it all your own way.

Another advantage of not taking an *ida y vuelta* ticket to Toledo is that on our return to Madrid we can make a deviation in order to visit Aranjuez. You should not omit this visit if you are curious to know a certain aspect of the eighteenth century, the most characteristic aspect I think. Here the spirit of the century is perfectly and appropriately embalmed in a palace and gardens. The gardens, as I have remarked before, are not so much gardens as woods, but woods that have been half weaned from Nature, trimmed into stately avenues, coaxed into bowers and arbours, and here and there persuaded to give place to lawns on which gleaming marble figures gravely pose to the apathetic elms. But the woods have never quite submitted to conform to the demure demeanour of a garden, and although an army of gardeners is continually employed to subordinate them, they are impatient of control—the towering elms toss their mighty limbs petulantly, the oaks dig their trespassing talons into the lawns, the undergrowth breaks out into open mutiny, the hedges mock the restraining shears, and the irrepressible weeds fearlessly annex the untrodden walks. This partial

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triumph of disorderly Nature gives a dispiriting air of human abandonment to the scene. The very gardeners, who with the statues are the sole inhabitants of this immense solitude, wear, not unnaturally, an air of dejection. They know that there is none to commend their unavailing labours or to censure their extravagant noonday indolence. The Court never comes here, preferring the less discreet delights of San Sebastian. The infrequent visitor tires after the first avenue or two. This once lordly pleasance now serves only the purpose of a squirrels' playground and an evening auditorium for the nightingales.

The palace itself, a formal brick erection, edged with stone and crowned with a steep slated roof, is pure eighteenth-century. It shares the abandonment of the encompassing gardens, but its abandonment is more pathetic, being mixed with humiliation. Once reverberating with the frolics of a court, it echoes now only to the shuffling footsteps of a solitary caretaker and the monotonous tramp of the army of sightseers. "*Nous n'eûmes pas le temps d'en visiter l'intérieur,*" remarks Théophile Gautier complacently, "*et nous le regrettâmes peu, car tous les palais se ressemblent.*" Perhaps ; yet I am sure I should have regretted it had I neglected to perambulate this defunct eighteenth-century pleasure-house and its contemporary annex, La Casa del Labrador (Labourer's Cottage, if you please !), where the

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Court amused itself with playing at an elaborate and expensive rusticity. For it revealed with a terrible pathos the futility and falsity of those little-minded, little-souled people of the Rococo. They appear to have lived so consistently in the atmosphere of unreality that they derived pleasure only from illusion. Here you will find rooms decorated with porcelain tiles to imitate silk, and with silk to imitate porcelain tiles. The chairs are of marble to imitate wood and the ornamental birds of wood to imitate feathers. The clocks are furnished with silver spirals to imitate waterfalls. Everything seems to exist only for the purpose of imitating something that it is not.

But it is in the Casa del Labrador that the pettiness and artificiality of this eighteenth-century Court reached the limit of its wasteful folly. Here the restrained language of Baedeker becomes informed with such tremendous significance that I cannot refrain from quoting it: "We now return and pass into the Sala de Maria Luisa (VII.)," he says, in his dry, precise way, "with several clocks and vases and a crystal chandelier. The ballroom (Salon de Baile; VIII.) contains several musical boxes. The tables and chairs are of malachite. In Room X. the cornice and frames of the door and windows are of marble. Room XI. has a fine clock. The well-known Gabinete de Platina (XIV.) has panelled walls inlaid with gold and platinum. On a table in Room XV. stands an ivory

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bird carved with astounding delicacy. The floor is in marble mosaic. Room XVI. has a musical box and views of La Granja. We now return——” I wonder if, after writing this passage, in the crisp and transpicuous style of which he is a master, the precise and prying Karl realised that he had written the indictment of a whole civilisation.

An Armida-palace poised on the brink of a volcano! Already the volcano is in eruption. Ominous confusion of sounds beyond the Pyrenees which finally resolves itself into the tap of drums and the rattling of sabres. The Pyrenean passes are choked with the horse, foot and artillery of Napoleon’s marshals. Charles must abandon his gold and platinum “labourer’s cottage” and betake himself to Bayonne or Compiègne, or wherever the masterful Corsican may be pleased to direct. Maria Luisa must leave her Sala, with its “several clocks and vases and crystal chandelier.” Shifty young Ferdinand, too, must throw away his musical boxes and lay obsequiously his newly acquired crown at the Emperor’s feet. For the age of unrealities is over. The gardens and palaces of Aranjuez are deserted for ever. Spain is at last face to face with something that is by no means illusion—revolution and invasion.

It is time that we turned to see how Francisco Goya, he who was never illuded, comported himself in this new age of blood and iron.

XIII

THE DISASTERS OF THE WAR

THERE are surely in the world few more unlikely places in which to surprise a stroke of political sagacity than the works of that *homme à bonnes fortunes*, Giovanni Casanova. The affairs of what I suppose he would call his heart left him only too little leisure to ruminate upon the affairs of nations. Yet an observation of his which he has duly recorded in his *Memoirs* shows a really penetrating insight into the psychology of the Spanish people. "Que vous faut-il ?" he inquires rhetorically of a Spaniard in the year 1768, and then reports himself as making answer : "Une forte révolution, un bouleversement total, un choc terrible, une conquête régénératrice . . . il faut le feu cautériser la gangrène qui vous ronge." If we are to take these words in a predictive sense the saying becomes the more remarkable still, for the Guerra de la Independencia, which we know better as the Peninsular War, could scarcely be more aptly summarised than as "un bouleversement total, un choc terrible"; and if that drenching baptism of blood failed to regenerate altogether the Spanish people, at least it roused

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them from their age-long lethargy into a momentary frenzy, whether demoniacal or divine it must be left to every man's discretion to determine.

The year 1808 ushered in the glorious disasters of the war. It was one of those *anni mirabiles*, when the slow-grinding mills of God for once revolve with roaring haste, responsive to some secret acceleration of the machinery of Fate. The revolution of Aranjuez, the downfall of Godoy, the abdication of Charles IV., the delirious entry of the young prince into Madrid as Ferdinand VII., the post-haste flight of all the royal family across the Pyrenees, compelled by the bullying cajolery of Napoleon, the insurrection and carnage of the *dos de Mayo*, the proclamation of Joseph Bonaparte, the Emperor's brother, as King of Spain and the Indies—all this was accomplished within the space of a couple of months. We cannot stay now to take the measure of these events, but we must arrest the whirling cinematograph at the memorable 2nd of May and look for a moment at Goya's ensanguined vision of that fateful day, with its ghastly sequel of the following dawn.

Forty thousand French troops under Murat held Madrid. The populace silently and sullenly looked on. The atmosphere of Maravillas and Lavapies was dangerously explosive—the *majos* muffled themselves in their cloaks and scowled

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more ferociously than ever, the *majas* jeered openly at the strange French uniforms. But as yet the uneasy quiet which hung over the capital was undisturbed by any act of violence. Ferdinand, fooled to the top of his bent by Napoleon, had posted off to Bayonne to get the Emperor's confirmation of his accession to the throne, leaving orders that the French were to be treated in friendly fashion. On the morning of the 2nd of May a couple of coaches ready for the road drew up in front of the royal palace. The Madrileños gathered round in curious crowds to see what was on foot. Who was going on a journey? Presently the news spread that it was the little Infante Don Francisco—he of the flaming scarlet trousers in Goya's group of the royal family—who was to be whisked off over the Pyrenees by the Emperor's orders. This was too much. The people, who had allowed a foreign army to march through the country and seize the capital without raising a finger, exploded with anger at the kidnapping of a prince of the royal house.

With one of those incalculable, spontaneous impulses of the mob, the Madrileños flung themselves upon the French Imperial Guard. Knives flashed out from beneath the long cloaks and hacked at horses and horsemen; heavy cavalry swords slashed at the citizens indiscriminately, armed and unarmed. The artillery, which was posted in the square before the royal palace, now

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choked with the crowd, was brought into action. The guns spoke, and cleaved narrow lanes of death through the living mass. Again and again roared the murderous volley, and then the savage Mamelukes were let loose upon the broken and flying Madrileños, chasing them up the Calle Mayor and cutting them down in hundreds in the Puerta del Sol.

This ghastly day, the *dos de Mayo*, was followed by a yet more terrible night. Murat gave orders for the arrest of all who were found carrying arms or assembled in groups of more than eight, or who were suspected of molesting the French or of being friends of the English. Hundreds of citizens, guilty and innocent alike, were seized, marched outside the town, made to kneel down in the pale lantern light, and shot point-blank by platoons of infantry. The dawn broke, and still from the valley of the Manzanares and the slopes of the Montaña del Príncipe Pio came the dreadful rattle of musketry. In all, more than two thousand Spaniards paid for their explosion of patriotism with their lives.

Goya has perpetuated the memory of these harrowing scenes in the two large canvases which hang in the ante-room of the Prado Gallery. One, "Episodio de la invasión francesa en 1808," represents the struggle in the Puerta del Sol—the Spaniards sticking their daggers into the horses and tearing the Mamelukes out of the

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saddle. A scene of murderous confusion, and yet a confusion rather too suggestive of the flowing convention of the battlepiece to convince us of the presence of the painter as an eyewitness. The other picture, "*Escenas del 3 de Mayo*," seems unquestionably to be the rendering of a thing seen, and not only seen, but felt, in the very quick of the spirit.

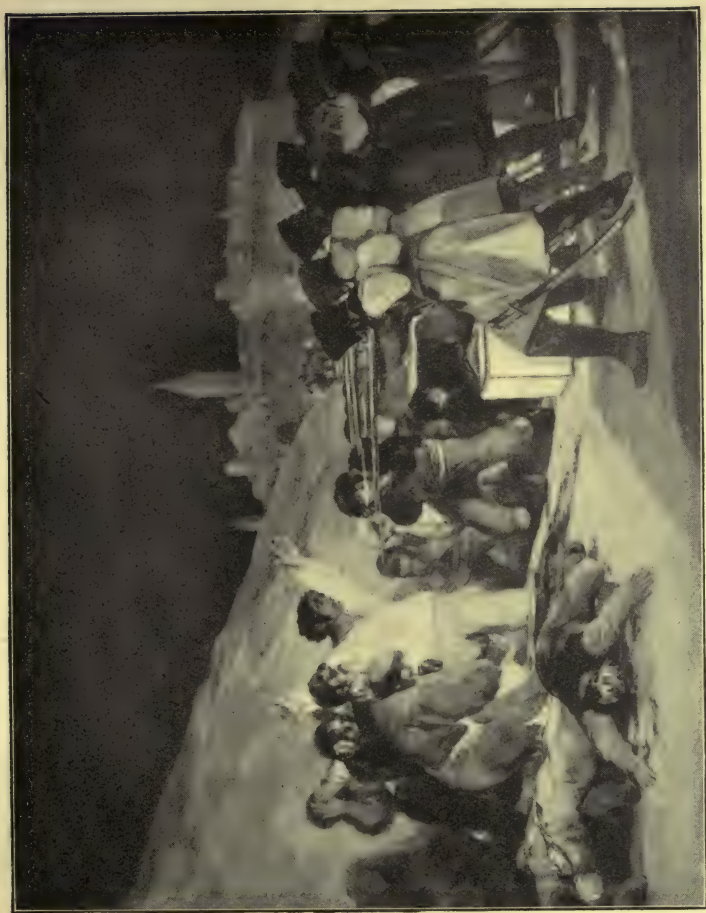
The scene is a bare hillside just out of Madrid. The city itself is dimly silhouetted against the leaden sky of dawn. In the foreground the firing party is drawn up. The attitudes of the soldiers are finely observed. They stand solidly planted on the ground, their heads inclined with a grim, business-like intention over the stocks of the levelled muskets. A direful significance transforms these common French privates into anonymous figures of destiny, sombre, avenging, implacable. And that murderous row of gun-barrels, pointed with bayonets, which we meet again and again in Goya's studies of the war, as though it had bitten itself ineffaceably into his memory, becomes a kind of symbol of blind, unrelenting, pitiless doom. Only a foot or two from the points of the bayonets kneel the convulsive, flinching victims, some with arms desperately flung out and eyes starting with terror, some with hands folded and heads bowed in shuddering dismay. Before them in a pool of blood lie the bodies of their comrades, their faces rent with the musket

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balls. Behind them another batch of victims is seen approaching, seeking to blind themselves from the horror of the scene by burying their heads in their hands.

Had all the tones of the picture been kept within the range of the prevailing drab and leaden grey, its tragic power would have been sufficiently compelling, but the cold stream of light gushing out from the huge lantern and bursting upon the vivid yellow of the shirt of the swart-faced kneeling figure in the centre, carries the sense of horror to an almost intolerable pitch. The eye ranging at large over the scene is peremptorily recalled to that blazing yellow shirt. Colour was surely never used with a more sensational effect. It is clamant and penetrating. The very paint becomes audible and the agonised shriek of the wretched victim rings out upon the still air of dawn.

Perhaps there is no picture the technique of which is more significant of the painter's temper. It plainly betrays in every inch Goya's mood of nervous excitement. He has discarded the brush and dashed the paint on with the knife. Every stroke seems to have been delivered with the fierceness of a blow. It is not so much a manipulation of paint as a manifestation of bitterness and ire. The emotion which this picture arouses in us is well expressed by the Italian writer, De Amicis, when he says: "It is the last point which painting



Photograph : Anderson

THE THIRD OF MAY, 1808
FROM THE PAINTING IN THE PRADO GALLERY

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can reach before being translated into action ; having passed that point one throws away the brush and seizes the dagger . . . after those colours comes blood." Yet with all its passion the picture shows the working of an intense restraint. Contrast it with all the other tragic pictures of which there is no lack in the galleries of Europe. In most of them the element of tragedy is achieved by the heat and height of colour and by a confusion of tumultuous line. Here, with the single exception of the blinding yellow, the colour is almost monochrome ; the composition is extremely simplified and derives a certain rigidity from the predominance of vertical and horizontal lines. The tragic quality is determined by a sense of deliberation and inevitability. And how fine an emotional value is added by the distant view of the sleeping city. It does much more than localise the scene—it suggests that strange, indifferent tranquillity which places seem to assume when they become the scene of our human tragedies.

It has been said that in looking at this picture we must think of Goya first as a patriot and only secondarily as a painter. And yet within a few weeks we find the patriot taking the oath of allegiance to King José and wearing the cross of the invaders' Legion of Honour on his breast. "Kings may come and kings may go . . ." Would you rather expect to find this fiery son of Aragon, gun in hand, at the barricades ? But the springs

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of the passions are not so quickly touched after the lapse of sixty-two years. Goya found himself in that dilemma which confronted all the intellectuals at this crisis of the country's history. The national party was the stupid party, bigoted and reactionary. The vicious Ferdinand was its incredible idol. On the other hand, the rule of the usurping Joseph promised an immediate application of that reforming zeal which had just regenerated France. In most cases self-interest swayed the balance in favour of the new dynasty. It seemed prudent to be on the side of Napoleon's big battalions. Almost all the members of the official and educated classes became *afrancesados*, partisans, enthusiastic or otherwise, of the French. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that only a week or two after the outbreak of the 2nd of May the pusillanimous Ferdinand wrote a servile letter to Napoleon expressing "his satisfaction at seeing his dear brother, King José, seated on the throne of Spain." When the King himself had hauled down his colours, was it not permissible for the subject to lay down his arms?

I cannot, in fact, believe that Goya's interest was deeply engaged in the scuffle of politics. He was determined, if he conveniently could, to keep his place and his emoluments. For the rest he cared only to be at leisure to pierce with those lynx eyes of his beneath the surface show of things to the underlying ecstasies and agonies

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of the spirit. The issues which absorbed him were deeper and vaster than those of the politician and the economist. In the depths in which his tortured spirit dwelt the noise of the collision of factions and of the collapse of thrones was scarcely audible. He saw the tragedy of his country but as an aspect of the grander tragedy of human life.

We shall better understand the spirit of Goya's terrible and beautiful series of etchings, "*Los Desastres de la Guerra*," if we first take note of the character of the war itself. It was not so much a *guerra* as a *guerrilla*, not an ordered contest on a large scale but a scattered series of brutal and bloody episodes. The planning of the campaign and the brunt of the main engagements fell chiefly upon the English. On the Spanish side there was neither organisation nor leadership. The *Junta Suprema de España é Indias*, supreme only in its inefficiency, was ignorant even of the name of its own commander-in-chief! The sole strength of the Spanish cause lay in the frenzied hatred of the Spanish people for the foreigner. During the past three hundred years the national spirit, which had seemed to be extinguished, was but smouldering subterraneously. The outbreak of the *dos de Mayo* fanned it into a raging flame. For the mass of the people the causes of Faith and King and Country were one and indivisible. France, atheistical, republican and

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alien, was the negation of all three. The war had the character of a crusade—it was a war of extermination.

Nothing could show more vividly the fanaticism of the popular hatred of the French than the contemporary literature of the nationalist party. A spirited document, entitled “A Civil Catechism and Brief Compendium of the Obligations of the Spaniard,” sets forth the popular creed in somewhat startling terms. Here is an extract :

“*Question.*—Tell me, child, what are you called ?

Answer.—A Spaniard.

Q.—How many obligations has a Spaniard, and what are they ?

A.—Three : to be a Christian—Catholic, Apostolic and Roman ; to defend his religion, his country and his laws ; to die rather than be conquered.

Q.—Who is the enemy of our felicity ?

A.—The Emperor of the French.

Q.—And who is this man ?

A.—A new lord, infinitely evil and avaricious, the source of all evil and the destroyer of all good ; he is the compendium and depository of all vices and iniquities.

Q.—How many natures has he ?

A.—Two—one diabolical and the other human.

Q.—Is it a sin to kill a Frenchman ?

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A.—No, padre, on the contrary, we gain heaven by killing one of these heretic dogs.”

The gross caricatures of Bonaparte over which the English mob made merry seem to lack body when compared with this portentous and dogmatic denunciation.

The seed of hate bore a harvest of slaughter. From Galicia and Valencia, from Andalucia and Castille, from every quarter of Spain, came tales of massacres of the French, and outrages upon the *afrancesados*. The people acquired a frightful taste for blood. A story is told of a village in Estremadura which would be ludicrous were it not tragically significant of the popular temper. The natives of Almaraz, converting their ploughshares into swords, marched in a body to the mayor. “What do you want?” inquired the functionary. “Sir,” replied the spokesman of the mob, “we wish to kill somebody. In Trujillo they have killed one, in Badajoz two or three, in Merida as many more, and we don’t wish to be behind our neighbours. It is necessary that we kill a traitor.”

That is but one side of the picture. The reverse is more terrible still. War is inevitably calamitous, but never was there a war waged with more infamous ferocity than the Guerra de la Independencia. Of the conduct of Napoleon’s veterans in their other campaigns I cannot speak, but here

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they showed themselves little less than fiends in human shape. There was no act of brutality, no subtlety of torture, no hideous obscenity, of which they were not guilty. For the most part they fought not with trained troops but with a rabble of peasants, with women and children. It was not so much a war as the martyrdom of a people.

In a case in the basement of the Prado you will find a set of drawings in sanguine, the preparatory sketches for "*Los Desastres de la Guerra*," in which Goya told the story of this national tragedy. Of many of the incidents of the war Goya was himself an eyewitness; under some of the scenes he has written: "*Yo lo ví*" (I saw it); "*Y esto también*" (And this too); "*Así sucedió*" (Thus it happened). In the autumn of 1808, after the first heroic defence of Zaragoza, he visited the beloved city, and received an exact account of the exploits of that Spanish Jean d'Arc, Maria Agustina, who when the last gunner of a battery had fallen climbed over the heap of corpses and herself fired the cannon in the face of the advancing enemy. And in that journey through the death-stricken country what did he not himself see and hear of the disasters of the war! Here in these trenchant pencil strokes is the record, with the terse commentary of a man whose heart was too full for many words. Burning villages, women fleeing with infants at their breasts or quivering at the point of the bayonet, fields of unburied dead



NOT FOR THESE—NI POR ESAS
FROM A PRELIMINARY DRAWING FOR NO. II. OF "LOS DESASTRES DE LA GUERRA"

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—“*Para eso habeis nacido!*” he comments (For this were you born!)—mutilated men impaled upon the trunks of trees—“*Grande hazaña. Con Muertos!*” (A great feat with the dead!)—on the scaffold the grim rows of garotted peasants—“*No se puede saber por qué*” (No one knows why). Sights still worse—“*No se puede mirar,*” he writes (Things that cannot be seen)—and beneath an act of extremest savagery—“*Qué hay que hacer mas?*” (What is there more to be done?).

It is characteristic of Goya that he viewed war stripped of its pomp and circumstance. He saw it as it was and is—the uncaging of the tiger in man. He seems indeed to have been almost blind to that aspect of heroism which redeems the primal savagery. The heroic act of the Maid of Zaragoza draws from him a note of admiration—“*Qué valor!*” For the rest, he reiterates the exclamation—“Brutality!” About the greatest of human illusions he has no illusion. In drawing after drawing he states without mincing matters his conviction that to fight is after all only to murder. I think that it is this insistence not merely upon strife but upon murder that gives these drawings a character of horror more emphatic than that of any other representations of warfare. And it is not only against the barbarousness of war that he utters his passionate protest, but also against its tragical illogicality. Two men fly at one another’s throats like dogs for no better reason than

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that one was born in Valencia and the other in Provence ; hale men who once won their bread now beg for it, maimed and useless ; women suffer anguish and outrage ; children starve and die in the streets—why ? he questions bitterly, why ? why ?

This series of “ Los Desastres ” has been read by some as a kind of epic of patriotism. I confess I am unable to view it in that light. To me it appears rather to be at once satirical and elegiac. The passion that inspires it is not the patriot’s hatred of the invader but the sick horror of a sensitive spirit at the human lust of blood. Patriotism is blind of an eye and sees but one half of the truth ; Goya’s vision was direct and impartial. He refuses to make his countryman the hero and the invader the villain of the tragedy. He shows a company of soldiers shooting down a couple of wretched peasants and comments : “ *Con razón ó sin ella* ” (With or without reason) ; in the next drawing a peasant armed with an axe is seen hacking at a wounded soldier and his annotation is : “ *Lo mismo* ” (It is all the same). For him there is neither Frenchman nor Spaniard, there is only man, and he laments bitterly that man is only a little higher than the beast. The emotion of patriotism was submerged in the deep tide of despair that swept over his soul.

Yet although Goya was shocked by the disasters of the war, there can be no doubt that he was also

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fascinated. There is of course no paradox here, but only an exemplification of a common psychological experience; for the fascination of being shocked is at the root of much of human entertainment, from the Greek theatre to the modern daily paper and cinematograph show. To most men, however, the spectacle of tragedy is only pleasurable, or indeed only tolerable, when it is represented, realistically, perhaps, but still viewed at several removes from real life. The Spaniard, owing to the persistence in his nature of a certain primitive insensitiveness, is not so queasy as the rest of us over-civilised Europeans; he can dispense with the fictitious element in tragedy and comfortably digest his horrors raw. The bull-fight is not the only instance of his crude relish of pain. The realistic and agonised images which are to be found in Spanish churches prompted Maurice Barrés to remark: "I suspect the Spaniards of finding pleasure in the sight of the sufferings of Christ." I have already alluded to this element of tragedy in the art of Ribera. Here we find it even more insistent in the art of Goya. He was impelled by an irresistible—and I suppose racial—impulse to seize life upon its tragic side. He had not to search for his material, for in the Spain of his day, or rather of his later days, the tragic side was uppermost. It is in his treatment of the material, however, that he differs from the other great masters, both in painting and

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literature, who have woven the tragic web of life into the tissue of art. These have in part unravelled the tangled threads and impressed upon tragedy a certain ennobling design. With their deeper and clearer vision they have discerned the gleam of a divine order in the welter of mortal happenings; and in discerning an order they have discerned a lurking and unsuspected beauty. When caught up into their art the agony of life has not indeed fallen away, but become transfigured. They have half-heard the whispered secrets of Fate; they may not know how to interpret the message aright, but they are reassured; and their assurance gives their work largeness and serenity. They know that the blindness which man attributes to destiny is in himself, and that, could the scales but fall from his eyes, he would see the tragedy of life to be none other than the Divine Comedy.

The tragedy which Goya shows us has gone through no purifying process in his spirit. It has not been transfigured or re-created; it is still patternless and raw-edged. It has not passed into music, not even into the sobbing music of a dirge—it is the same unmodulated shriek of anguish that assaults our hearing in the daily affray of life. He holds up to us only the mirror of our own perplexed despair. His vision is keen enough to detect the fraud of all those comfortable illusions and superficially explanatory

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philosophies with which we weakly attempt to anæsthetise the smart of reality—these he tears contemptuously away ; but he is too fevered and impatient to see life steadily and whole. He shows it to us in a disconnected series, slices of life, bleeding fragments, torn from the congruous body. And, because no synthesis is possible for him, he believes that none exists. He despairs of life—but with a despair that does not smoulder into apathy but flames up in bitter revolt. His tone is always challenging and accusatory. And since there is no credible or even intelligible answer to his accusation, he passes swift and savage judgment. He pardons nothing because he understands nothing.

I shall be reminded that it is not the business of art to attempt to solve the problem of pain or to hazard guesses at the riddle of the universe, and that Goya showed a just sense of its limitations in preferring to exhibit slices of life rather than to attempt an interpretation of the whole. He tosses us these raw and palpitating fragments and leaves us to digest them as best we may. Strong meat and nourishing—but is it ingratitude to look for something more ? For we of the lesser sort also see life fragmentarily, without coherence, as children in a crowd catch broken glimpses of a passing procession, and we could wish that the seer from his higher altitude might give us a larger presentment, either in words or paint, a

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view of the whole, not less but more true than that disorder of reality which bewilders our feeble eye. . . . But heaven forbid that at this late hour I should be lured into a discussion of the purpose of art—a digression which I am sure would be infinitely longer and more barren than any of which I have been guilty hitherto.



XIV

THE JOURNEY'S END

I AM in two minds whether to write this last chapter or not. The thirteenth must, I am afraid, have been rather dispiriting, and I see little prospect that this will be any better. Did we not come to Spain to be amused, not depressed? And yet, to tell the plain truth, I can never be very long in Spain before the melancholy fit falls. I have often wondered whether all travellers are subject to the contagion of this malady which seems to me to be endemic in the Peninsula. I must assume that they are not—some of the pleasure-seekers at any rate appear to be uniformly successful in their search. I suspect, however, that they are travelling in a Spain of their own imagining, a land where all the women are Carmens with flashing eyes and roses twisted in their raven tresses, all the men toreadors in gala dress, or bandits in disguise, or at the very least gay rascally gipsies, where nobody ever does anything but smoke endless cigarettes, or strum upon guitars, or dance to the exhilarating clatter of the castanet. I scarcely know whether to envy them or not. For the Spain of my imagining is

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like a landscape over which the great clouds roll their shadows, its glittering gaiety swiftly tracked by the submerging gloom ; a country of hard outlines unsoftened by the haze of sentiment ; of a keen, unveiling atmosphere which compels the eye of the mind no less than of the senses to view things realistically. In such a land one is hurried from immoderate delight to unreasonable dejection. Pleasure has a precarious tenure ; tends therefore to become intense and avid ; makes haste to glut itself before its prey can be wrested from it. I don't suppose that life is more tragic in Spain than elsewhere ; it is more naked, that is all—in most other countries the skeleton is decently covered up or hidden in the cupboard.

I will ask you, however, to descend for the last time the stone steps leading down to the basement beneath the Prado. The most memorable experience that I ever received in a picture gallery was when I passed through the door of this room for the first time, and found myself face to face with the "Two Men fighting with Cudgels" (*Dos hombres riñendo a garratazos*). It was like a plunge from a tepid atmosphere into ice-cold water, that sends the blood racing back to the heart. I had, as you know, just made a preliminary tour of the whole gallery. I had seen no small number of tragic and realistic paintings. But all the time I had been aware, delightfully aware, that they *were* paintings—here for the moment I was

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illuded, and stepped back as though I had been struck by a blow. I don't mean to imply that the illusion depended upon any trick of verisimilitude. The painter had made a clean sweep of all the easily recognisable details of reality and almost of colour itself. But his intention seemed to have been fundamentally different from that of all the other painters whose canvases covered the walls of the gallery. They had all been engaged in translating, or rather re-translating, reality, adding glosses, often very beautiful glosses, of their own. They had all been preoccupied in one way or another with beauty. They had all been undisguisedly anxious to please, determined to make the best of things and to ransack the most commonplace material until they had succeeded in bringing to light some element of pleasure, were it only the iridescence of the mud. I told you how, on looking at Ribera's realistic picture of "The Martyrdom of St Bartholomew," I quite forgot the tragedy of the scene in the sheer exhilaration of the colour and the energetic line. Goya alone seemed to have had no eye upon the spectator. Nothing can have been further from his mind than the desire to please. He happened upon a hideous incident and he painted it with the same spasmodic directness with which another man at seeing it might have ejaculated an oath. All the other painters used blank cartridge; Goya alone loaded with ball.

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Two peasants, shepherds apparently, strike at one another's heads with clubs. The face of one is already almost battered in. In the oblivion of their hate they have sunk knee-deep into a swamp. They have no thought but to hurt and to kill. Behind them is a dark, desolate landscape of piled-up and fantastically shaped mountains. In the low heaven hang grey sullen clouds. In it all there is an implication of primitive and elemental rage, indescribable in words. The savage and unfamiliar character of the landscape suggests a remote age when the earth was but newly formed out of the void. And man emerging out of the slime, "the disease of the agglutinated dust," first manifests his life in an outburst of fratricidal hate. It is a new vision of the eternal tragedy of Cain.

I turned and saw that the walls of this section of the basement were covered with canvases of like character and colouring, if colouring is not too vivid a word to apply to the narrow range of grey-greens, grey-yellows and grey-blacks in which all the pictures were executed. In all of them a rude, almost inchoate handling, mostly knife-work, I take it, gave a decisive effect to the brutality of the conception. These canvases were painted by Goya for the decoration of the little country house which he had acquired on the other side of the Manzanares, near the Puente de Segovia, about half-an-hour's walk from the

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town. His wife died about the time of the restoration of King Ferdinand, in 1814. All his children save one predeceased him. Here, in *la quinta del sordo*, as the place was popularly called (the deaf man's house), the old man lived on alone, in a soundless world, with his bitter thoughts and his disordered visions and his distressing memories of the horrors of the war. And here he painted his last testament, his apocalyptic vision of a ruined world. Can we read in these sombre and cryptic canvases the half-disclosed secrets of the painter's soul ?

Here we are struck by the resounding reverberation of that slight note which we first observed in the paintings of the monastery of Aula Dei—the preoccupation with the crowd. It had been growing all the while in Goya's work. Although as a portraitist he was compelled throughout a great part of his life to deal with the single figure, when he painted for himself and not for his patrons we find him almost invariably choosing to paint men in the mass. Probably the psychology of the crowd interested him more than the psychology of the individual, for the temper of the crowd is always more violent, more passionate, more elemental, than that of the individuals who compose it, and violence and passion were the qualities which had the most forcible fascination for Goya's nature. Certainly the surging tumult of the crowd gave scope to his brush to exercise

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itself in those problems of movement which intrigued him even more, I think, than the problems of light. Goya, always a city dweller, was familiar with crowds, the crowd of the bull-fight, the crowd of the pilgrimage, the crowd of the royal procession—at the joyous entry of Ferdinand into Madrid in 1808 the press was so great, we read, that the progress of the monarch from the Puente de Segovia to the royal palace occupied six hours—and during the war, as in all periods of intense popular excitement, there were crowds everywhere and always. Are we to see a significance in the fact that Goya, who was not only the last of the old masters but the first of the new, painter to the Court though he was, painted by preference the people? At any rate, we cannot fail to notice the contrast with his predecessor of a more aristocratic age. Velasquez consistently used his brush to dignify the individual; the only crowd that he painted, that in “*Las Lanzas*,” is a military crowd, orderly and motionless, subordinate in interest to the two principal figures. The historian may read in Goya’s work the passing of the aristocrat.

Nevertheless, they must have a great fund of ingenuity who hold to the view that Goya was an eager and enlightened democrat. If it be true that he whipped the Court with satire, he had scorpions with which to lash the mob. From his house across the Manzanares he could see every



Photograph : Anderson

VISION OF THE PILGRIMAGE OF SAN ISIDRO
A DETAIL FROM THE PICTURE IN THE PRADO GALLERY

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15th of May the crowds of country folk and townspeople flocking to the Hermitage of San Isidro, the patron saint of Madrid. The pilgrimage lasted a fortnight, and like most pilgrimages (our own included) had a pleasure-seeking no less than a serious intention. In his earlier days Goya had looked with a kindly eye upon these scenes of popular merry-making. But now the old man, prowling in the meadows of San Isidro at night-fall, sees the riotous crowds returning to the city and in his heart there is only bitter, mirthless laughter. The faces of the returning pilgrim-revellers shine out of the surrounding gloom, wan and fantastic. As the procession tops the hill the figures bunch themselves together in a pyramid-shaped heap, a shouting, drunken, frenzied mob. In the foreground a guitar player, with gaping mouth, rolls his eyes in a delirium. Not a sound pierces the ears of the deaf painter, but he *sees* the drunken roar. "This the Sovereign People? Sots! Madmen!" he exclaims as he turns on his heel and makes his way back through the noiseless darkness to the *quinta del sordo*.

At night crowds populate his dreams, but crowds more fantastic and terrible than those of any human pilgrimage. Here is a midnight crowd of witches, squatting round a satanic shape in the form of a goat cloaked with a mantle. This diabolical side of Goya's imagination was prominent in his work almost from the first. It

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has been noted as inexplicable that a man who looked outward upon reality with such clear-sighted gaze should at the same time have continually turned the eye of his mind upon the occult and satanic world of a seemingly diseased imagination. Stranger still that he who scoffed at every form of superstition should have so deeply imbrued his work in the dye of it. Such psychological problems we can scarcely hope to unravel. I have a private fancy that a clue may possibly be found in the persistence of haunting childish memories. When in the long winter evenings the old women gathered round that immense yawning hearth in the little hovel in Fuendetodos, what blood-freezing stories of witches and spirits of evil must not the little Francisco have drunk into his soul!—seeds which, falling into his furiously working imagination, bore a monstrous harvest of nightmare fancies. Perhaps in the folk-lore of Aragon lies the clue to much of the occultism of the “Caprichos.” A mere conjecture, that’s all.

Still more obscure and enigmatical grow these darkling visions. Here is a fantastic landscape in which we can discern horsemen and coaches—is it a wedding party?—while overhead two crouching forms ride in the air, and in one corner we catch a glimpse of that familiar symbol, the gleam of levelled gun-barrels—a vague impression of menaced joy and impending fatality. In another

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picture we see four intertwined half-naked figures floating midway between grey earth and grey sky; "Las Parcas" (The Fates) is the title that has been given to it—but who is the fourth form who is borne impotently along in the lap of the other three, with hands bound behind his back and a hopeless, senseless leer upon his face? Can it be a derisive image of Man, drifting in the winds of fate? Last and most fearsome of all, an ogre, gigantic, naked, with wild white hair and starting eyeballs, devouring a human body. Brutally the gnarled hands grip the poor flesh; the head is gone; the arm disappears into the cavernous mouth. Here at last the *sæva indignatio* of the painter seems to have swept him far out of the sane tradition of European art into the abyss of the monstrously and the savagely grotesque, which only the perverse imagination of the East has dimly explored.

Are we to find in these tremendous symbols Goya's considered and final verdict?—Life a senseless, soulless force, that creates only in order to annihilate its own creations; Destiny a huntress whose game is man; and Man himself, pitted against incalculable odds, foredoomed to disaster—a manikin, whose puzzled endeavours and shattered joys and imbecile passions are the theme of the high mirth of the gods: that is the sad conclusion of the whole matter. It is not an answer to the riddle of the universe—it is a denial that

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any answer exists. It is an affirmation of the Everlasting No !

It seems impossible to escape from this interpretation of these despairing visions, and yet I am well aware that it is one that is difficult to reconcile with Goya's many expressed or implied professions of belief. I remember that Brother James, the plumbing brother at the monastery of Aula Dei, was careful to point out to me that, though he did not live a good life, the painter of the monastery frescoes was not an enemy of the Faith. At the time I was inclined to be sceptical of the latter of these assertions at any rate ; but I have since thought that the pious Father may not have been so far astray as I had supposed. That the author of the "Caprichos" was an Anti-Clerical scarcely needs to be stated ; but neither should it require statement that an Anti-Clerical is not of necessity an Anti-Catholic. That he was no friend to priests and monks as a class, though he could be friendly with them as individuals, that he bitterly hated and pitilessly exposed the ecclesiastical abuses of the age, may be admitted without establishing a charge of infidelity. His explicit affirmation in his will of his belief in the Trinity may be regarded merely as a concession to legal prudence. Not so easily, however, can the personal note in his intimate letters to his friend Zapater be explained away. "God give us life for His holy service," he exclaims quite simply.

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And another time, during an attack of illness, he beseeches his friend to pray for him to the Blessed Virgin. Such expressions do not fall naturally from the lips of a professed unbeliever. The correspondence with Zapater ceases in 1801. It may be that the calamities of the following years bred doubt and despair. We know how the horrors of the war harrowed his soul ; what grief he suffered by the death of nineteen of his children we can only conjecture. He had a solid ground for pessimism.

But what need is there to stumble at a contradiction or two in a man's life ? Consistency is but a pedestrian virtue after all. There is room enough in the human heart, God knows ! for Faith and Despair to lie down side by side. They are well-acquainted bedfellows. We have all good reason, though not all of us courage enough, perhaps, to cry out with Walt Whitman : " Do I contradict myself ? Very well then, I contradict myself ! " A wise man leaves it at that. Or he may go further and, like Miguel de Unamuno, find a zest in the stubborn inward conflict : " I will not make peace between my heart and my head ; rather let the one affirm what the other denies, and the one deny what the other affirms, and I shall live by this contradiction." We have equal justification for calling the chess-board of life either black or white ; in his latter years there seems to be little doubt that Goya preferred to call it black.

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In this he was not alone. There was a temperamental tendency in the philosophy of the age to paint the world blacker than it is—black, I mean, than we hope it is. It may give rise to curious speculations to recall that about the time when Goya was decorating—or shall we say darkening?—his house with these sinister canvases, Schopenhauer was training the heavy guns of pessimism upon the modern world. European thought was flying the signal of distress. The Romantics were marching to the music of a lament. Young men everywhere were suffering, not without a certain delicious languor perhaps, the pangs of the *Weltschmerz*. We can be very sure that these voices of the North never penetrated to the *quinta del sordo*, and that its inmate would never have listened to them if they had. Like all good Spaniards he had a healthy aversion to reading, unless the book were the sensational book of life. But it is a striking and often repeated circumstance that, in times of special stress, common ideas and still more common emotions arise spontaneously and independently of one another. A wide chasm, however, separated Goya's pessimism from the fashionable pessimism of the age. The prevalent melancholy was the melancholy of young men, which is never without a certain luxurious rapture. In quite another sense than that which Keats intended it is true that "in the very temple of Delight

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veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine." Goya's despair was the infinitely bitterer despair of age, savouring of the sour relish of experience. In his case, moreover, it was not an exotic flower which fascinates by its very strangeness; it was an indigenous root, bitter with the bitterness of the soil.

"He who has faith in nothing," Araujo Sanchez has remarked in an able commentary of Goya's life, "he who doubts, belongs to no party." The pessimist is never a partisan. For this reason, it has always seemed to me strange that Goya should have been acclaimed as a prophet of liberalism; for liberalism is merely optimism in action. Neither am I able to see in him the gonfalonier in art of the French Revolution. The revolutionary, if he is at all distinguishable from the mere nihilist, professes an affirmative creed; Goya's was wholly negative. Doubtless the painter was the revolutionist's temporary ally in the preliminary work of breaking down, but he had no plan of reconstruction. Indeed, the cardinal mistake of most of those who have theorised about Goya's life and work would seem to be that they have insisted on making a thinker of him. The lasting part of his achievement is founded not in thought but in passion. Life came to him not through the intellect but through the senses, as indeed it comes to most men, but his senses were in more immediate contact with his

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spirit, touching it directly with pangs of joy and pain. He saw and felt, but he did not stay to reason. He had indeed no time, for with him a thing seen did not slowly wind its way into the brain to be transformed into thought ; it flashed straight to the heart and fired his passion, as a spark ignites a powder magazine. His utterance is always explosive, never ratiocinative. Though his work was largely satirical, it lacks that fine edge of irony which cannot be put upon satire without a certain deliberation and even detachment from ire ; his satires are the hot expostulations of an angry man, outspoken, abusive and coarse, if coarseness could make their meaning plainer. His tragedies must not, I think, be taken as the shocking illustrations of which the revolutionary makes use to sting his audience into a reforming zeal ; they are more like the spontaneous exclamations of horror which you may sometimes hear from highly strung spectators in a theatre, inextricably compounded of pleasure and pain. The violent and the tragic fascinated him because in violence and tragedy life is usually raised to a higher power. The world showed itself to him in a series of vivid visions, as a landscape is seen in lightning flashes, more intense and abrupt than in the equal light of day.

“ Il est de la famille de Voltaire, de Diderot et de d’Alembert,” said Yriarte. I rather think that that is a family which counts no Spaniard among

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its relations. The neatly planned logical systems of these philosophers, their tolerant acceptance of a damaged world, their easy rejection of immortality, offer no relief to the tragic Iberian despair; nor can their ironical scepticism find currency across the Pyrenees until translated into the language of passionate denial. "To cultivate one's garden"—in such uneventful drudgery the Frenchman may find a sufficient satisfaction; to the Spaniard it were a solution worse than no solution at all. Assuredly Goya's passionate blood knew no chill admixture with so temperate a stock. His soul was besieged by ghostly terrors undreamt of in the philosophy of the Encyclopædists. He was haunted by the spectre of Destiny, which for him wore the shape of a Destroying Angel, devoting man and all the splendid Babylonian edifices of his spirit to inexorable and purposeless destruction. Of what avail to cultivate one's garden when at the last the gardener himself must fall upon the upturned sod and become one with the insentient mould? "As we cannot attain the highest, which is to be immortal, to be God, let us wreck all,"—it is Unamuno once more, voicing the spirit of Spanish despair—" 'All or nothing,' that is our motto, like Ibsen's Brand." Among the drawings of the "Desastres de la Guerra" you will find one which at the first glance seems to be only a wild and unintelligible rendering of chiaroscuro. When you decipher it you will see

A LITTLE JOURNEY IN SPAIN

that it represents a corpse half buried in the earth. With a returning breath of life, the shape raises itself upon a skeleton arm and writes upon a scroll the word "*Nada*"—Nothing.

I am sorry to have to part with you, my friend, in this dim basement, before this dismaying image. I am sure you must feel that this is a somewhat cheerless termination to our pilgrimage. I am at a loss to know what to do for a happy ending, for I confess I am so unmodern as to have a predilection for happy endings. But perhaps I have taken these despairing visions too seriously, more seriously than their author himself. For these, you will remember, are the pictures which he painted to hang upon his own walls, the chosen companions of his *pétit déjeuner*. I cannot think without an admiring wonder of the old man sitting down every morning, with his coffee and roll and napkin, calmly surveying, and as it were defying, the menaces of Fate. His morning meal must have been a daily act of courage. No doubt he too, like another pessimist who refused to be intimidated by his own creed, thanked whatever gods may be for his unconquerable soul, and the years found him unafraid. And is it not assuredly more creditable for a man to enter upon a new day in such a mood of armoured courage than with a spirit which demands the fortuitous circumstances of a smiling heaven and scented roses

THE JOURNEY'S END

for the fulfilment of its felicity ? The pavement in front of Café Condal seems rather remote, does it not ? with its morning brightness and sea-scented air. Perhaps we should have been wiser if we had stayed there all the time, and entertained ourselves with our encouragingly optimistic breakfast companions and the agreeable confidences of *El Diluvio*. For my part, I am sure I shall never recapture that mood of matutinal serenity in this hard-featured and hard-hearted Madrid. I don't intend to stay here a day longer. To-morrow morning I shall leave for Salamanca, that city of golden silence, which pours with so generous a measure oil and wine into the wounded spirit. But I am afraid I cannot decently ask you to accompany me thither, for it contains, so far as I know, but one picture by Goya, and that not above suspicion.

And so—thank you for your companionship. Good-bye.

APPENDIX

A CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE MORE IMPORTANT EVENTS IN GOYA'S LIFE

1746. Born at Fuendetodos. In early youth studied under José Luzán y Martínez at Zaragoza.

1759. *Accession of Charles III.*

1765. Went to Madrid. Became acquainted with Francisco Bayeu.

1771. Obtained a prize awarded by the Parma Academy of Fine Arts with a picture entitled: "Hannibal surveying Italy from a Pinnacle of the Alps" (probably painted while still in Spain).

1771-1772. Painted the "Gloria" for the quadrangular vault in the Santa Capilla of the Cathedral of El Pilar in Zaragoza.

1772-1775. In Rome.

1775. Returned to Madrid. Married Josefa, sister of Bayeu.

1776. Received commission to design the cartoons for the tapestries to be hung in the Real Palacio del Pardo (completed in 1791).

1780. Member of the Academia de San Fernando.

1780-1781. Painted the frescoes in the Cathedral of El Pilar, Zaragoza (and probably about the same time those in the Cartuja de Aula Dei).

1781. Painted an altarpiece representing San Bernardino de Sena for the church of San Francisco el Grande, Madrid (not completed until 1784). Also for the same church a Crucifixion, now in the Prado.

1785. Appointed deputy director of the Academia de San Fernando.

1788. *Accession of Charles IV.*

APPENDIX

1789. Appointed Pintor de Cámara.
1792. Suffered the loss of his hearing.
1793. Obtained leave of absence from Court to visit Andalusia in order "to recover his health." Accompanied the Duchess of Alba to San Lucar.
1797. Completed the "Caprichos," series of etchings.
1798. Painted the frescoes of the Church of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid.
1799. Appointed Primer Pintor de Cámara with salary of 50,000 *reales*.
1808. *Abdication of Charles IV. Accession and abdication of Ferdinand VII. Invasion of the French, Proclamation of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain.* Goya visited Zaragoza and Fuendetodos.
- 1808-1814. *Guerra de la Independencia.* Death of Goya's wife. Executed various series of etchings—"Los Desastres de la Guerra," "La Tauromaquia," "Los Proverbios."
1814. *Restoration of Ferdinand VII.* (About this time painted the pictures for his own house, now in the Prado.)
1817. Visited Seville and painted the pictures of Santos Justa and Rufina for the cathedral.
- 1819-1828. Executed a series of lithographs.
1820. Painted San José de Calasanz for the church of San Antonio Abad, Madrid—the last picture that he painted in Spain.
1824. Visited Paris. Returned to Bordeaux, where he took up his residence.
1826. Visited Madrid. Received a superannuation salary of 50,000 *reales* and permission to return to France.
1828. Died at Bordeaux.

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